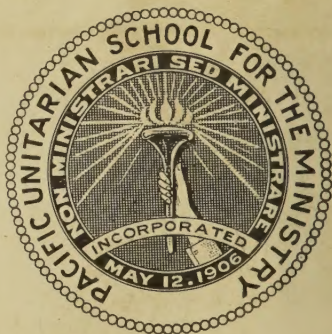


THE GENERAL BAPTIST MESSENGER

(Nos. 1 - 6)

(Oct. 1868 - Jan 1870)



BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

PURCHASED WITH THE INCOME OF THE FUND
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FREDERICK MADGE

1820-1908

SON OF THE REV. THOS. MADGE, 1786-1870, OF
ESSEX STREET CHAPEL, LONDON, 1825-1859

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The

General Baptist Messenger

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October 1868.. January 1870

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THE
GENERAL BAPTIST MESSENGER.

No. 1. Vol. I.

OCTOBER, 1868.

Price 1d.

INTRODUCTION.

WE have a few words to say to our Readers on the character and purpose of this little periodical, which is designed especially for circulation among the members of the churches that retain their connexion with the General Baptist Assembly. At the last meeting of the Assembly, a resolution was passed, "that the publication of a quarterly periodical for the communication of intelligence interesting to our churches, and for the interchange of thought on matters which concern us, is very desirable." These words so clearly express the object which we have in view, that they render any further statement of it unnecessary.

But the question will naturally occur, whether there is anything in the character or condition of our churches which requires a periodical especially designed for them. To answer this question, it is needful to look back to the origin of our body.

When the early Nonconformists united in churches, and those churches again grouped themselves in parties or sects, the principles which determined their union had reference to the principles of church organization, rather than to theological opinion. But some, at least, of these principles related to deeper matters than the constitution of a church. Especially, the distinctive ordinance of the Baptists is the symbol of the believer's personal, as well as his ecclesiastical relation to Jesus

that the soul shrinks from its grasp : I mean in youth, the precious spring-time of life. When God is speaking in loving, though solemn tones, to the glad heart ; when the whole soul is hungering for the bread of life, we fail to do the needed work.

Though I was admitted to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper when twenty, and was perhaps the youngest member of that household of faith, yet many years previous I should have rejoiced with exceeding joy to have professed my discipleship to my Lord and Master. Blessed be God for bringing me out of darkness into marvellous light, that I might know and love Him in my early years ! No joy or privilege can equal that we feel when first we come to dedicate ourselves on the altar of our God ; when we feel that our sins are forgiven, and we are renewed by the Holy Spirit. Heartily as I loved the sanctuary and its means of grace, I still longed for something more, for some cheering word or earnest prayer, besides the weekly ministrations of the Sabbath. But these I did not find.

"No one careth for my soul," is the cry of many a young heart seeking the way of salvation. Perhaps there is less danger of hypocrisy and self-deception when the soul is left to struggle alone with its Saviour and its God ; but there is also danger of its turning back to the world for the sympathy and affection which the church denies it. We read that the heart of Christ was so full of love that he took little children in his arms and blessed them, and folded them to his bosom ; and can those who bear his name better shew forth his spirit than by gathering in the lambs to his fold ? What season of life so fitting for a public recognition of the Christian truth as dawning manhood or womanhood ? Before cares and disappointments chill, and passion besieges the soul, how sweet that the freshness of life's capacities and hopes be offered to our God !

My desire is deep that more may be done to bring our young men and women into the Christian fold ; that it may be to them a safeguard in temptation, a consoler

in trial, a rebuker of sin, a sure haven from the storms of this passing life. Though not yet old, I have learned that the cup of discipline is a mingled one of joy and sorrow. Much, very much, has my precious faith done to cheer and guide me. As it has been the blessing of my life, so would I extend the same blessing to all walking with me the earthly way. As I have known a joy in believing deeper than words can tell, so I would have others receive a like joy.

Rev T B W Briggs

THE "CHRISTIANS" IN AMERICA.

THE majority of the readers of this periodical are, I believe, aware that in the early summer of the present year I left home for the United States of America, to see Dr. James Rogers Newton, of Newport, Rhode Island, the great healing medium of that continent. I had been strongly recommended to pay a visit to that gentleman by William and Mary Howitt, and others, who were personally known to him, and who had the most undoubting faith in his power to cure me of the neuralgic affection and general debility from which I had been suffering for the last eleven years. I am happy in being able to state that I was successful in securing the main object of my visit. I have written a full and particular account of my instantaneous and complete cure, and the readers of spiritualistic literature may know all I have to say by referring to the pages of the "Spiritual Magazine" and "Daybreak." My object in writing this article, however, is not to speak of myself half so much as of some good friends whom I was fortunate enough to see in America, and from whom I received all the generous kindness which they could shew, or I had any right to expect at their hands.

It will be remembered by some of my readers that an American minister, named Moore, came to England last year, as a delegate from the "Christian" denomi-

nation in America to the General Baptist Assembly in England, meeting in Worship-Street Chapel, of which my friend, the Rev. J. C. Means, is the minister. Circumstances prevented my attending the meeting of the Assembly in 1867, but I was made acquainted in various ways with its proceedings, and with the particulars of Mr. Moore's visits to several of our General Baptist churches; while all I heard of him conspired to create in my mind a desire to know more of that strange people who had flung aside all merely sectarian names, and dared to be willing to take upon themselves the one and honoured name of *Christian*. Accordingly, when I had decided to cross the Atlantic, I asked Mr. Means for letters of introduction to some of the officials of the Christian denomination, and any of the prominent members to whom he might feel at liberty to introduce me. Mr. Means at once, and in the very kindest manner, acceded to my request. Armed with letters from him, I had no sooner landed at New York than I sought out the gentlemen whose names appeared on my letters. My first call was upon a Mr. Brush, a partner in the firm of Seymour and Co., hardwaremen, 4, Chatham Square, New York. Mr. Brush received me with all possible courtesy, and on my informing him that I was about to pass on to Boston, gave me a letter of introduction to brother Edmunds, who lives in Dover Street in that city, and who is well known and highly respected as one of its ministers. I arrived at Boston at the beginning of what is there termed the Anniversary Week, and from Monday morning until Saturday afternoon went through a continuous round of dissipation, in the shape of attending religious and other meetings, morning, noon and night. Mr. Edmunds invited me to his house, and did everything that was possible to him to make my stay in Boston a pleasant one, and before I left America he kindly invited me to occupy his pulpit, which I did on the evening of June 5, when I preached from Job x. 2, to a deeply attentive congregation, and afterwards passed the night beneath Mr. Edmunds's roof.

On Saturday, May 30, I left Boston for Newburyport, a very pretty and growing town in the State of Massachusetts. The Rev. D. P. Pike is the minister of the "Christian" congregation in that place. Before leaving England I had seen a photograph of this good man, and when he was introduced to me at the Worcester railway depôt in Boston, I at once recognized him. He bade me welcome to America with all the heartiness and good-humour which are inseparable from him, and arranged with me that I should visit his home and church. I preached for him twice, on Sunday, May 31. The day was what we in England should call a perfectly scorching one, but the congregations were numerous, attentive, and very earnest. There was a fair sprinkling of the negro element in the church, and one coloured brother amused me excessively by adjusting an eyeglass upon his face, and then reading the hymns with the self-satisfied air of one who had at last found out the very best way of doing the work set down for him. I wish to offer through these pages my grateful thanks to brother Pike and his family, and indeed to all the friends to whom I was introduced through his instrumentality, for the careful attention they paid me, and the scrupulous desire they shewed to minister to my every want. I was unable then, and am still unable, to agree with them in all "matters pertaining to theology," but no inability to see "eye to eye" with them can ever efface the memory of their kindness, or break the links by which we are bound together in "the unity of the faith and the bond of peace."

On Tuesday, June 2, I left Newburyport for Haverhill, where I spent a few pleasant hours with a gentleman with whom I crossed the water from Liverpool, and who, although a high Calvinist, shewed me marked attention and bountiful hospitality. At Haverhill station, brother Edmunds, and I know not how many more "Christian" brothers, joined me, and we all went on by the Boston and Maine railroad to a little village called Newton, in the Christian meeting-house of which

it had been arranged to hold the *New-England Christian Convention*.

The good people of Newton, although by no means wealthy, had arranged to entertain their visitors, and did all that in them lay to make our stay amongst them a pleasant one. Large numbers of ministers, members and friends, assembled from different parts of the New-England States ; and during the three or four days that I was there, our time was entirely occupied by prayer meetings, business meetings, preachings, and conferences of one kind and another. The prayers were short, pointed, earnest and evangelical ; and no stranger could ever look on without feeling that all the parties engaged had made up their minds to work while it was called day, and to do all that could possibly be done to further the kingdom of God upon the earth. Brother Haley, who has just received an appointment as one of the professors of a college recently started by the denomination, preached an able sermon on the necessity of combining learning with piety, especially with respect to those whose labours are chiefly ministerial. I was kindly invited to preach one of the Convention sermons, which I did from Rev. iii. 20, to a congregation which filled every foot of available space in the large meeting-house. Several times during the Convention I was permitted to take part in the proceedings, and offered the brethren present, and, through them, the whole denomination, the Christian greetings and good wishes of our own General Baptist brethren in England. My expressions of good-will were very heartily reciprocated. I was made a life-member of the Convention, and asked to convey to the English General Baptists the expression of feelings similar to those to which I had given utterance. My stay with these friends did me great good, and helped to arouse and keep alive the determination to prosecute my work in the world with renewed diligence and faithfulness.

These "Christians" are not, as a body, wealthy or highly educated. But if I might judge from what I

saw and heard, I should say that they preach a plain and practical gospel, are eminently loyal to the Scriptures, and avoid involving themselves and others in wordy disputes about matters of controversy, which never have been settled, and never will be, until we pass the border-land, and our knowledge receives a large increase. They would seem to occupy in America about the same position that the Primitive Methodists do in England, with these differences—that they are believers in baptism by immersion, and do not hold what may be called Trinitarian conceptions of the nature of God and of Christ. All that I met with, both ministers and laymen, were Unitarians, holding the Arian hypothesis in reference to Christ. They are doing a great work in evangelizing the masses of the people, and no one who knows of their labours and persistency of spirit, but must wish them God-speed. One cannot help desiring that the leaven of a more liberal and thorough education were diffused through the body, not to supersede their present zeal, but to give a more intelligent direction to it. But time, which works wonders, will, it is to be hoped, enable them to secure this good, and, should it do so, I prophesy for them a yet greater measure of usefulness than that to which they have already attained. Should these simple words meet the eyes of brother Pike, brother Haley, brother Edmunds, or any of the other "Christian" friends whom I saw in America, will they be pleased to receive them as some expression of my thankfulness to them for their reception of me, and as an assurance that we in England offer them the right hand of fellowship, and grasp their hands with warm and brotherly affection.

FREDERIC ROWLAND YOUNG.

New Swindon, Wiltshire.

HARVEST HYMN.

(From "The Book of Praise.")

LORD of the Harvest ! once again
We thank Thee for the ripen'd grain ;
For crops safe carried, sent to cheer
Thy servants through another year ;
For all sweet, holy thoughts supplied
By seed-time and by harvest-tide.

The bare, dead grain, in autumn sown,
Its robe of vernal green puts on ;
Glad from its wintry grave it springs,
Fresh garnish'd by the King of Kings ;
So, Lord, to those who sleep in Thee
Shall new and glorious bodies be.

Nor vainly of thy word we ask
A lesson from the reaper's task ;
So shall thine angels issue forth ;
The tares be burnt ; the just of earth,
Playthings of sun and storm no more,
Be gathered to their Father's store.

Daily, O Lord, our prayers be said,
As Thou hast taught, for daily bread ;
But not alone our bodies feed ;
Supply our fainting spirits' need !
O Bread of Life ! from day to day,
Be Thou their comfort, food and stay.

JOSEPH ANSTICE.

THE DEPUTATION TO DERBY.

As many of our readers were not present at the Assembly, and have not read its Proceedings, it will be needful to give a short introduction to my narrative of this deputation.

In the "Introduction" with which our present num-

ber opens, mention is made of the secession of certain members of the Assembly in 1770, and the formation on exclusively "evangelical" principles of a body which has since been known as the body of "General Baptists of the New Connexion." This breach was not at first complete, but since the year 1803 the two bodies have had no connexion. I gave in my report as Messenger to the last Assembly, an account of the formation and growth of this "New Connexion," and expressed my belief that the time was come for an approximation between them and us, suggesting to the Assembly that they should take the initiative in it, and offering, if they approved, to be their messenger.

Various reasons led me to make this suggestion. Although the two bodies, as such, had been separated for more than sixty years, individual members of each had been brought together on the board of "Managers of the General Baptist Fund," and on the trust of Captain Peirce Johns's endowment, two foundations older than the separation of the two bodies, and in which both have retained a share. Through these and other ways, I had become acquainted with some of their people; among others, with the late Adam Taylor, the historian of the General Baptists, the late Revds. Joseph Wallis (tutor of their Academy at Leicester) and G. W. Pegg, the Revds. John Stevenson, M.A., now of Ilkeston, T. W. Matthews, of Boston, Dr. Burns, of London; and more recently with Dr. Underwood (Principal of their College at Chilwell), and the Revds. Thos. Goadby, B.A., lately removed from London to Derby, and J. Clifford, M.A., of London. I had besides, as Treasurer of the General Baptist Fund, corresponded with several of their younger ministers, to whom grants of books had been made; and when I add that my reports to the Assembly as Messenger in 1866 and 1867 had been reprinted almost entire in the pages of their Magazine, it will be understood that I was pretty widely, and not unfavourably, known among them.

Those who have observed with any attention the movements of the Evangelical Dissenters for some years

past, cannot fail to have noticed the growth of a wider and more liberal spirit; and this induced me to hope that the kindly overture which I wished the Assembly to make would be favourably received by them, and that an approximation would be thus brought about to which my known theological leaning and personal feelings strongly inclined me. But, above all, I looked to our communion with them for an infusion of that deeper religious spirit on which, as I felt strongly, the prosperity of our churches must depend.

It was, then, with great delight that I found that the feeling of the Assembly was in harmony with my own, as was shewn by the passing of the following resolution :

“That our brethren J. C. Means, S. Martin and J. Marten, be appointed to convey to the approaching General Baptist Association at Derby the expression of our interest in their Christian welfare, and our desire for the interchange of friendly offices between the two parts of the General Baptist body.”

The way for this resolution had been further prepared by the presence of Dr. Underwood at the Assembly, and by his having taken part in the religious service of the morning.

The “Association” is the general convention of their body, corresponding to our Assembly; but it is of course much more numerous, and its sittings are extended over a longer period. It was held this year three weeks after the Assembly; and the following is an outline of the arrangements :

Monday evening, June 22.	Meeting for conference and devotion.
Tuesday morning, „ 23.	Ditto ditto.
„ forenoon,	Meeting for business.
„ evening,	Annual meeting of the Home Mission.
Wednesday morning, 24.	Meeting for conference and devotion.
„ forenoon,	Public religious service.
„ afternoon,	The Lord’s Supper.
„ evening,	Annual meeting of Foreign Mission.
Thursday morning, „ 25.	Public religious service.
„ forenoon,	Meeting for business.
„ afternoon,	Ditto ditto.
„ evening,	Meeting for conference and devotion.
Tuesday afternoon was occupied by Committee meetings.	

Our dear brother Samuel Martin was prevented from attending, so that brother John Marten and myself went alone. By the kindness of the Rev. John Stevenson, we were both of us hospitably lodged and entertained by friends at Derby whom he had interested in our favour ; and it was an additional gratification to me that I was entertained under the same hospitable roof as my old and valued friend, the Rev. T. W. Matthews, of Boston.

We reached Derby, a large, well-built town, with a population of nearly 50,000, early in the afternoon ; and in the evening we attended the opening meeting at the chapel in "St. Mary's Gate." This chapel was formerly a gentleman's mansion, built of red brick, in the somewhat heavy style which prevailed a century ago. Its ground-plan was an oblong square ; and it had two principal floors, each with a range of five large windows, a basement, and probably attics ; but it has been gutted, the basement being left, and has been enlarged by pulling down the back wall and throwing out a half-octagon into the garden behind. The front remains without alteration ; and, though not ecclesiastical in its character, has, with its spacious forecourt, its lofty flight of steps to the principal entrance, its handsome doorway and tall windows, a stateliness of its own. Internally the chapel is commodious and admirably arranged. The principal entrance leads into a lobby, partitioned off, with doors into the body of the chapel on either hand ; and the pulpit is placed against the middle of the partition, with the pews arranged round it in a form approaching to that of a semicircle, and gradually rising to the walls on every side. There is a gallery all round the chapel ; the part which is over the lobby and has the organ in it, immediately behind the pulpit, not being so deep as the other part, which, like the pews, is nearly semicircular in its form. The central situation which, as will be understood from this description, the pulpit occupies, gives the preacher the full command of his audience, and enables them nearly all to see and hear him well. Immediately round the pulpit is a roomy table-pew, in which was

erected a commodious platform, which remained standing during the whole of the meetings of the Association. The chapel will hold, I should judge, twelve or fourteen hundred people.

The meeting on Monday evening was not very large: it was presided over by the Rev. John Stevenson, M.A., whom I have already mentioned as a friend of long standing. Several of the ministers present, myself among them, were called upon by the Chairman to engage in prayer or to address the meeting. Among others, the Rev. J. C. Jones, M.A., of Spalding, in Lincolnshire, gave a deeply interesting account of the large addition made to his church during the last year, in which more than a hundred persons had been baptized. He said he was not aware of any particular efforts that they had made, neither had there been any particular excitement; but the ordinary meetings of the church had been pervaded by an unusually deep and solemn earnestness, which had been noticed by distant friends who had visited them. Among those who had shared in this earnestness were several of the boys in his school, and among them the sons of some of his brethren in the ministry, with whose education he had been entrusted. Mr. Jones's narrative was exceedingly simple and unpretending, and made a deep impression both on my brother Marten and myself.

In the meeting on Tuesday morning, the Rev. W. R. Stevenson, M.A., of Broad-Street chapel, Nottingham,* gave some particulars of a meeting which had recently been held by the Congregationalists in that town for conference on the means of diffusing religion among the working population of our large towns; after which, some conversation took place on the subject, and several of the friends present engaged in prayer.

* Nottingham is one of the strongholds of the New Connexion. The town, with its suburbs, Lenton, and Old and New Basford, contains six General Baptist churches, with twelve places of worship belonging to them, and about two thousand members.

After this meeting, the greater part of the company adjourned to breakfast in the basement of the chapel. I may observe here that the numerous vestries and school-rooms belonging to the chapel, with the forecourt and the garden behind, afforded an unusual amount of accommodation. Breakfast, dinner and tea, were provided in the basement, so that the friends who were not resident in the town did not need to leave the premises. We had thus many opportunities of pleasant intercourse with various members of the body, and of becoming personally acquainted with them.

After breakfast, the company re-assembled in the chapel, and the proper business of the Association began, the Chairman taking the chair in the centre of the platform, on which the Secretary and some other officers also had their place. The Chairman, who is appointed yearly, was the Rev. T. Goadby, and the Secretary, who holds his office for three years, the Rev. John Clifford, of London. I had previously communicated to Mr. Clifford the resolution of the Assembly, and he had arranged that the deputation should be received at an early stage of the business.

Consequently, after some resolutions of course had been passed, and some committees appointed, we were called up on the platform, where we presented a copy of the Assembly's resolution to the Chairman, and were invited to address the meeting, from which we received a greeting so hearty and unanimous as greatly to delight us. I had anticipated a kind and courteous reception, but hardly so cordial a one as we received. I cannot judge of the number present. The published "Minutes" of the Association enumerate above seventy ministers present, and about a hundred and sixty representatives; and it is probable that there were from two hundred to two hundred and fifty persons present at this time, the place of those who had not yet arrived being supplied by the townspeople or other friends.

After we had spoken, Dr. Underwood rose to move a resolution in acknowledgment of our greeting, which he

did in the kindest manner, especially referring to the liberality with which we had made grants from the General Baptist Fund to young ministers and students of their body. After him, the Revds. John Stevenson and Dr. Burns spoke with equal kindness, and the following resolution was passed unanimously :

“That we cordially reciprocate the good wishes of the Assembly of the Old Connexion of the General Baptists, and welcome the Revds. J. C. Means and J. Marten as messengers from them to the present Association.”

The Chairman then proceeded to deliver his address. This is a part of the proceedings much more attractive than the transaction of business ; and a large audience was drawn to listen to it. It was a very admirable address, occupying an hour or more in delivery, and was listened to throughout with much attention. It was not only printed in the minutes, which is usual, but also separately, and many copies were subscribed for ; some of these have been distributed among our churches.

The Home Mission meeting in the evening was held in the other General Baptist chapel, in Osmaaston Road, of which Mr. Goadby has lately become the pastor. It is a very elegant gothic building, in the form of a cross, and will hold 800 or 900 people ; the transepts are occupied by vestries, and the chancel or choir by the baptistery, which is of unusual but exceedingly convenient form and arrangement, paved with encaustic tiles, and not covered in. The chapel is said to have cost nearly £10,000, and to have been built mainly by the efforts, and in a considerable degree at the cost, of the late Mr. Robert Pegg, a member of the congregation.

The meeting filled the floor of the chapel ; but neither this, nor the meeting of the Foreign Mission next night (which was still more numerous, filling the floor of the larger chapel in St. Mary's Gate), interested me so much as the other gatherings. Yet there was, both in the speakers and the audience, an earnestness that was very impressive, and some of the speeches had considerable power.

The public service on Wednesday forenoon was well attended; and the sermon, by the Rev. S. Cox, of Mansfield-Road chapel, Nottingham, was a very excellent one, and has since, by desire of the Association, been published in the General Baptist Magazine for August. The text was Jeremiah xx. 9; and the preacher recognized the human element in the prophetic writings with a clearness, and handled it with a freedom, which I had not expected. The sermon was an exhortation to ministers and other Christian workers to be faithful in their work, undiscouraged by seeming temporary failure.

The communion on Wednesday afternoon was to me the most impressive service of all. The communicants filled the floor and part of the gallery of St. Mary's-Gate chapel, and must have amounted to nearly 800. The union of such a number to commemorate the death of Him "that loved us and gave himself for us," was sufficient of itself to fill one's heart with a devout and comprehensive feeling of brotherhood in Christ; and when, at the close of the service, the whole body burst spontaneously out with a hymn, of which this was the burden,

"O sacred hope! O blissful hope!
Which Jesus' grace has given;
The hope when days and years are past
We all shall meet in heaven,"—

I felt overpowered; especially when my eye caught that of my old friend Matthews, of Boston, fixed upon me, as if to express to me how fully he recognized that we were one in Christ. The hymn was sung to the well-known secular air, "Auld lang Syne."

I have already noticed the Foreign Mission meeting in the evening. The Thursday morning service I did not attend; and the meetings for business in the forenoon and afternoon presented little to record here, except the reading of an admirable "Letter to the Churches" by the Secretary, Mr. Clifford, on the "Non-attendance of Professed Christians at Public Worship." It has been printed separately, as well as in the "Minutes," and

copies have been taken and sent to most of our churches. With the afternoon meeting the proper business of the Association closed.

The evening meeting for free conference and prayer, was more fully attended, and pervaded by a yet deeper and holier feeling than the previous similar meetings. Several of those present, brother John Marten among them, prayed; some of them spoke of their domestic trials, and requested the prayers of the friends. I was at first startled by this, considering the publicity of the meeting; but the sense of incongruity passed away as I caught the prevalent spirit, and the consciousness of publicity was lost in the deeper feeling of Christian brotherhood. This meeting is thus spoken of in the Association "Minutes:" "At the previous Association, held at Louth, special prayer was made to God for the conversion of the children of ministers then assembled. Faith and prayer were rewarded, for at the Thursday night meeting one pastor spoke of three children brought to the knowledge and love of Christ since then; another of two; a third, of a godless prodigal returned to the Father's house; and a fourth, of one hundred and eleven persons baptized, several of them being the children of ministers: and in each case distinct reference was made to the remarkable meeting at Louth as the beginning of the 'times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.'"

I returned to London next day, with brother John Marten; and found that he had received the like impressions with myself from this free intercourse with a body, among whom the great truths of religion are not mere matters of speculative inquiry, but everlasting realities, a conviction of which is wrought into and pervades and animates their inner life. It is the earnest hope and desire of us both, that the delegation should be repeated in future years, and that others of our ministers, especially the younger ones, may have the privilege which this year was allotted to us.

JOSEPH CALROW MEANS.

POLITICAL PURITY.

WE are verging upon days which will be trying days to the followers of Christ. They will be intensely exciting days, and, as such, likely to throw mind and conscience off the even balance. I refer, of course, to the election of men to serve as representatives in Parliament. The pulpit is possibly not the place to give an opinion on political parties—to say which faction, according to one's judgment, holds the larger amount of political truth or of political error—but it is pre-eminently the place to urge men of all parties to seek and to be subject to the best principles of government; to remember that *right* and *wrong* are at the bottom of all political action, that they should use only such means in “the service of political truth as are consistent, first, with that particular truth, and also with the general principles of morality and of Christianity.” The pulpit is the place where also it should be strongly represented that, while as a politician you take full liberty to endeavour to convince those whom you think to be mistaken of their errors, you should be solicitously careful to put into operation no cause which shall make your fellow-man alter his political conduct at the expense of contradicting his judgment and of doing violence to his conscience. Assuming that you are right as to the political measure, and he is wrong, looking at the matter broadly, it is a sad success which is secured at the price of moral deterioration. Let there be no taking counsel to give “large money” to make men lie, though that which is a lie in relation to the speaker or actor may be a truth in relation to principle, political or moral.

We wish to see our nation great and stable. The Book which has been so widely a blessing to us as individuals teaches that “righteousness alone exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.” Can it by any casuistry be shewn that to use station, money, learning, or other power at command, for the purpose of inducing a man to do or to say what is contrary to

his belief, is an act of "righteousness," and that it will help to exalt a nation?

Let us shew that we are prepared to encourage political *conviction*, and even to aid those around us to become fully persuaded in their own minds that we honour men, not because they think as we think, but because they fairly, and at some cost of time, effort, feeling, try to learn what is *true*, and have the disposition and the will to do what they believe to be *right*. Such a spirit and such a bearing on our part will help to make the nation "righteous," will also aid in healthfully drawing class nearer to class, and will greatly assist in counter-acting and in hastening the expulsion of the diabolical spirit, which in every age, under varying conditions, has made its appearance—the spirit which bargains that for so much money there shall be so much lying.

From "A Sermon for the Times" (Matt. xxviii. 11—15), by the Rev. T. Lloyd: in the "Christian World" of Sept. 25, 1868.

Our present number contains four pages more than our usual quantity; but we were reluctant to omit any of the articles, or to abridge them to the extent which would have been required to bring them within our ordinary limits.

Published by E. T. WHITEFIELD, 178, Strand.

Packets of four or more copies sent post free, or 25 copies for 1s. 6d., by application to Mr. T. N. DYER, 15, Duke Street, London Bridge, London, S.E.; to whom also all payments are to be made.

THE GENERAL BAPTIST MESSENGER.

No. 2. Vol. I.

JANUARY, 1869.

Price 1d.

HOW OUR GENERAL BAPTIST CHURCHES WERE PLANTED AND HOW THEY GREW.

CHAP. I.—THE EXILES IN HOLLAND—JOHN SMYTH AND THOMAS
HELWYS—THOMAS LAMB AND HIS CHURCH.

WHILE, like all other bodies which take the Scriptures as their rule of faith and practice in religious matters, we claim a virtual identity with the church of the New Testament, we do not hold it necessary to trace an unbroken transmission to us through the dark ages of its essential features. It is enough for us that we can appeal to the original records of Christianity in justification of what we believe and practise. Whether there were in all the intermediate generations those who held our views and transmitted them to others by the contact of living souls, or whether they were for a time forgotten and afterwards revived, we are not concerned to decide. Those whom we regard as the founders of our existing organization cared nought for any “apostolical succession,” except that which consists in an inheritance of truths that the apostles taught, and ordinances that the apostles sanctioned and observed.

The English Baptists were from the first divided into “General” and “Particular.” “General” is equivalent to Arminian, and “Particular” to Calvinistic; but I apprehend that the Calvinism of the greater part of the Particular Baptists, so called, has been so far modified as almost to have disappeared.

There is a tradition that there was a General Baptist

church at Canterbury at the time of the Reformation, and that Joan Bocher, who was burned for heresy, by the instigation of Cranmer, in the reign of Edward VI. (A.D. 1550), was a member of it. The martyrdom is certain, but the rest is doubtful. There were Baptists, English and Dutch, in England in the reign of Elizabeth; but they were bitterly persecuted, and at length ordered, on pain of confiscation and imprisonment, to leave the kingdom; on which many of them retired to Holland. During the early part of the reign of James I., the emigration continued, the hope which had been cherished of relief from the accession of that monarch not having been realized.

Thus far, with the exception of the doubtful tradition about Canterbury, we have no notice of the existence of General Baptist churches. The first of these was founded by Mr. John Smyth, who has been consequently regarded as the Father of our body.

This John Smyth was originally a clergyman of the Church of England, incumbent of Gainsborough, in Lincolnshire, a neighbourhood in which many Nonconformists, or Separatists as they were termed, were found, and from which many of the founders of New England proceeded. These Separatists appear to have been chiefly Congregationalists, if not entirely: and Mr. Smyth's notice being drawn to their distinguishing views, he was led to discard many things in the discipline and usages of the Established Church; and at last, nobly sacrificing interest to conscience, he resigned his living and became a minister among the Separatists, and being persecuted by the High Commission Court, withdrew with his congregation to Holland, and joined the exiles who were already settled there.

It was after his settlement in Holland that he became a Baptist; and this further change led to his separation from his associates, by whom he was assailed with bitter revilings. However, he boldly maintained his views, and having gained several converts, chiefly or entirely English, he formed them, in or about 1608, into a dis-

tinct church. This is thought to have been really the first English Baptist church formed after the Reformation; it is at least the first whose origin is distinctly known. As neither Mr. Smyth nor his congregation allowed infant sprinkling to be baptism, they felt it right now to observe the ordinance of Christ according to their present views; and consequently either Mr. Smyth first immersed himself and then the rest, or two persons were appointed to baptize each other and then the rest. It is of little moment to discuss the evidence for either statement; but it is somewhat amusing to look back and see that the charge of baptizing himself has been represented as a very serious one; he was reproached as a "Se-Baptist" (self-baptizer), and as doing that which only a divine command would justify.

Whether his belief of general redemption preceded or followed his baptism, I cannot learn: it seems to have proceeded from the same cause, a regard to what he believed to be the doctrine of the Bible. His changes have indeed subjected him to the reproach of being "of an unsettled head" (Neal, *Hist. of Puritans*), but they appear to have been only a gradual repudiation of doctrines and practices in which he had been brought up. His learning and ability are admitted, and his sufferings and sacrifices for conscience' sake are proofs of his integrity. Various doctrines were imputed to him by his opponents as grounds of reproach, which in the present day would be regarded as harmless; so that it is needless to inquire whether he really held them. He was an eager controversialist, but the spirit of the age was controversial; and if his zeal degenerated into intolerance, there were few in that day who could cast a stone at him on that account; and we who live in a more tolerant age should make allowance for temptations and influences to which we are less exposed than our forefathers.

Mr. Smyth died in or about 1611, and was succeeded in the pastorate of his church by Mr. Thomas Helwys or Helwisse, who had aided him in gathering the church.

By this Mr. Helwys and his church was printed (A.D. 1611) a Confession of Faith, the earliest of those published by the Hanserd Knollys Society. It is clearly the Confession of a General Baptist Church, and consists of twenty-six articles, from which I give some extracts :

“We believe and confess:—1. That there are three which bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Spirit ; and these three are one God in all equality ; by whom all things are created and preserved in heaven and in earth. 1 John v. 7 ; Phil. ii. 5, 6 ; Gen. i.”

“5. That God before the foundation of the world hath predestinated that all that believe in him shall be saved, and all that believe not shall be damned : all which he knew before. And this is the election and reprobation spoken of in the Scriptures, concerning salvation and condemnation ; and not that God hath predestinated men to be wicked, and so to be damned, but that men being wicked shall be damned. Eph. i. 4—12 ; Mark xvi. 16 ; Rom. viii. 29. For God would have all men saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth, and would have no man to perish, but would have all men come to repentance, and willeth not the death of him that dieth. 1 Tim. ii. 4 ; 2 Pet. iii. 9 ; Ezek. xviii. 32. And therefore God is the author of no man’s condemnation, according to the saying of the prophet, Thy destruction, O Israel, is of thyself ; but thy help is of me. Hos. xiii. 9.”

“8. That Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the second person or subsistence in the Trinity, in the fulness of time was manifested in the flesh, being the seed of David, and of the Israelites, according to the flesh, the Son of Mary the Virgin, made of her substance by the power of the Holy Ghost overshadowing her ; and being thus true man, was like unto us in all things, sin only excepted, being one person in two distinct natures, true God and true man. Rom. i. 3, ix. 5 ; Gal. iv. 4 ; Luke i. 35 ; Heb. iv. 15.”

“14. That baptism, or washing with water, is the outward manifestation of dying unto sin, and walking in newness of life ; and therefore in nowise appertaineth to infants. Rom. vi. 2, 3, 4.

“15. That the Lord’s Supper is the outward manifestation of the spiritual communion between Christ and the faithful, mutually to declare his death until he come. 1 Cor. x. 16, 17, xi. 26.”

Other articles shew that the church held the views then generally entertained by the Puritans, and now, though with great modifications, by those who are termed Evangelical, on the fall, justification by faith, the imputation of Christ’s righteousness, and the everlasting torments of the wicked.

Shortly after the publication of this "Confession of Faith," Mr. Helwys and his church returned to England, thinking they had done wrong in withdrawing from it; and determined to brave the persecution from which they had fled. This corporate removal shews not only the strength of their conviction, but the closeness of their ecclesiastical organization, and also their possession of competent resources. They thus became not only the first church of English General Baptists, but also the first church of that body in England. Their return brought them again within reach of their persecutors, and their meetings were accordingly exposed to frequent interruptions. I cannot find in what part of England they settled.

It may be mentioned here that a manuscript of this Confession, preserved among the archives of the Mennonite (Dutch Baptist) Church in Amsterdam, has the original subscription of forty-two names, indicating possibly the number of the members of the church. Among the names are those of John Smyth and Mary Smyth his wife, the former with a line drawn through it, perhaps indicating his subsequent decease. Mr. Helwys's name is not there; so that it is likely that the Confession was drawn up, though not printed, at the foundation of the church, and that Mr. Helwys joined afterwards.

Leonard Busher, a citizen of London, who published in 1614, "*Religion's Peace, a Plea for Liberty of Conscience*," the earliest known English treatise in that behalf, has been claimed as a member of Mr. Helwys's church; but Dr. Underhill, in his introduction to the reprint of this tract by the "Hanserd Knollys Society," considers this a mere conjecture. The writer was certainly a Baptist, whether General or Particular. The author of two other tracts in support of the same great principle, of nearly as early a date ("*Objections Answered by way of Dialogue*," A.D. 1615,* and "*A Most*

* Reprinted in 1662, with the title, "Persecution for Religion judged and condemned."

Humble Supplication of Many of the King's Majesty's Loyal Subjects," A.D. 1620), was pretty evidently a member of that church, for he refers to "our Confession in print published four years ago;" so that the General Baptists were among the earliest, if not the very earliest, champions of liberty of conscience.

These early General Baptists had also published tracts in support of their peculiar doctrines. One of these, "*The Character of the Beast*" (a title characteristic of the times), published in 1609 by Mr. John Smyth, is a quarto pamphlet of seventy-three pages, now very scarce. We give two passages :

"For the separation, who are the stiffest and most obstinate adversaries of this truth of the Lord, I could wish, as the tyrant wished concerning the people of Rome, that all their heads were joined into one, and all their strength comprised into one writing, that, with the sword of the spirit, it might be smitten off at once; that so we might have an end of this controversy, and that we might not be troubled and charged with the writing and printing of many books. However that be, we profess our readiness to employ our time and cost for the maintenance of the truth." (*Preface.*)

"As ye love the Lord and his truth"—he is addressing his opponents—"and the people that depend on you, seek it out and embrace it, and resist it not. If we be in error, shew it to us. Why? Shall we perish through your default? Will not the Lord require our blood at your hands? Are we not your countrymen? All of us in exile for the common truths we hold against Antichrist? Answer, we beseech you, in the Lord. If we be in error, it is ignorantly, and of a desire to see the truth, and to fear the Lord. Thus, hoping speedily either to hear an answer to this writing, or to see you yield to the truth, which I unfeignedly ask of the Lord for you, my countrymen, I send this writing the 24th day of March, 1608.*

"J. SMYTH."

Another piece, translated from the Dutch, and supposed to be the work of Mr. Helwys or one of his congregation, was published in 1618, with the title, "*A Plain and Well-grounded Treatise concerning Baptism.*" A letter in defence of baptism, signed H. H., and apparently not intended for publication, having fallen into the hands of a zealous member of the Church of En-

* 1609 as we now reckon. They began the year then on the 25th March; we begin it now on the 1st January.

gland, was published by him, with an answer to it, under the title of "*Anabaptisme's Mystery of Iniquity unmasked, by J. P.*," A.D. 1623. The editor alleges that the Baptists wrote many books, and that they denied the doctrines of election, reprobation, and final perseverance; and that their sentiments both with regard to predestination and baptism gained multitudes of disciples. An old book, entitled "*Truth's Champion*," by J. Morton, the date of which I cannot find, but which probably belongs to this period, vindicates, it is said, in a good style and with skilful reasoning the principles of the General Baptists.

As we approach the period of the great civil war (1642), our notices of the General Baptists become more numerous; and we cannot attempt more than to notice some of their leading preachers, and the foundation of some of their ancient churches, especially of those that still remain with us.

Thomas Lamb was born at Colchester, apparently about the beginning of the century, and, having joined the General Baptists, appears to have become pastor of a church in his native town, where a church still existed and was represented in our Assembly in 1697. He was apprehended by order of Archbishop Laud and brought before the Court of Star Chamber on a charge of teaching a congregation of Separatists. He refused, when questioned by that arbitrary court, to criminate himself, and was consequently remanded to prison. His wife besought Laud to release him out of pity to her and their eight children; but the Archbishop desired his servants to "take away that troublesome woman." Mr. Lamb was, however, discharged after a time, and resumed his ministry; nor, though imprisoned again and again, could he be deterred. That man, he said, was not fit to preach, who would not preach for God's sake, though he was sure to die for it as soon as he had finished. He gathered a church in Bell Alley, in the City of London, at the back of the Bank of England.

His church seems to have been very numerous, and many of the members were themselves acceptable and laborious preachers; they visited several parts of England, and even of Wales, and made many converts. Beside the church's stated meetings for worship, the members appear to have had meetings for the discussion of fixed subjects; and in these conferences women are said to have been allowed to take part.

In 1645, while the Presbyterians were predominant in London, Mr. Lamb was again arrested. In fact, he was confined at one time or other in nearly all the jails in London. He had been originally in business as a soap-boiler, and his only title to the ministry was the call of his own church, which, according to the ordinance of the Parliament of 1645, was insufficient. He was consequently, by order of the Lord Mayor of London, arrested during one of the public services of the church; but the officers desisted on his promise to attend in the evening before the Lord Mayor, who ordered him to find bail to appear before the Committee of Parliament, by which he was committed to prison. A young man of his congregation, who had just begun to preach, was joined with him in this persecution; but, by the intercession of some powerful friends, they were released, and renewed their labours with increased earnestness.

An interesting anecdote is recorded of Mr. Lamb. He was about to baptize, in the river Lea, at Old Ford, near London, a woman whose husband was a bitter enemy of the Baptists, and had provided a large stone to throw at Mr. Lamb. But the prayer before the administration of the ordinance so affected him, that he dropped the stone, melted into tears, and was himself the next person baptized.

Mr. Lamb appears to have died in 1672, at an advanced age. He was the author of several works. Among these were one on "*Particular Predestination*," published in 1642; "*Absolute Freedom from Sin by Christ's Death for the World*," published in 1656 and dedicated to Cromwell; and a pamphlet, "*The Fountain*

of *Free Grace opened*," the date of which I do not know. In the last of these he appears to have sought to reconcile the doctrine of the election of individuals with general redemption, thus approximating to what is sometimes called Baxterianism. There is reason to think that his church became extinct before the end of the seventeenth century.

Rev J C Mearns

THE AGED BELIEVER.

BY DR. W. L. ALEXANDER.

I'm kneeling at the threshold, weary, faint, and sore,
Waiting for the dawning, for the opening of the door ;
Waiting till the Master shall bid me rise and come
To the glory of his presence, to the gladness of his home.

A weary path I've travelled, 'mid darkness, storm, and strife,
Bearing many a burden, struggling for my life ;
But now the morn is breaking, my toil will soon be o'er ;
I'm kneeling at the threshold, my hand is on the door.

Methinks I hear the voices of the blessed as they stand,
Singing in the sunshine of the sinless land ;
Oh, would that I were with them, amid their shining throng,
Mingling in their worship, joining in their song !

The friends that started with me have entered long ago ;
One by one they left me struggling with the foe ;
Their pilgrimage was shorter, their triumph sooner won :
How lovingly they'll hail me when my toil is done !

With them the blessed angels, that know not grief nor sin,
I see them by the portals, prepared to let me in.
Good Lord, I wait thy pleasure—thy time and way are best ;
But I'm wasted, worn, and weary—oh, Father, bid me rest !

THOUGHTS AT A BAPTISM.

WE offer some thoughts suggested by witnessing a baptism. To us it is an ordinance of unfailing interest. We never can look upon it without glistening eyes and a more quickly beating heart. Our own religious life glows with awakened fervour through its sympathies

with the new disciples ; and our spirits are elevated, sharing the prayers and aspirations put forth in their behalf.

In the present case it was the sight of the young believers, now gathered into the fold of Jesus, that deeply moved us. There was in it occasion for so much gratitude and hope. There seemed to be such a fitness about it. It was so right and proper they should bring this morning sacrifice to their Heavenly Father ; that while the dew of youth was yet fresh upon them, and the flush of health and happiness was theirs, they should make of them an offering to their God. Not for them are the haunting memories that cast a shadow over the coming of those later years. Not for them the remorse for a wasted, misspent, selfish, sinful life ; bringing, as it were, the dregs of that life to the Giver. They know that, little as that offering may be worth, He will not refuse to accept it ; but can the true heart ever forgive itself for all that it might have been, and was not, and perhaps never can be ?

The young have come to that altar to save them from all this. Taking "the shield of faith," their coming was a confession that they were not sufficient unto themselves ; that they needed a Saviour to guide their steps, and keep them from stumbling and falling in the journey of life. Is it not cause for rejoicing, that they are blest in seeing the danger and hatefulness of sin thus early, that they seek thus to escape its sting and stain ? They have exchanged the self-confidence of youth for a surer confidence in Jesus.

Deeply interesting is the mingling of hope and distrust in the heart of the young Christian. Who would not pray they might always remain ? The hope that youth gives, the belief that it will succeed in the course it longs so heartily to pursue ; the timidity and distrust that come from the sense of weakness and unworthiness ; the enthusiasm, the earnestness, the resolution and the unworldliness of those early hours of Christian life—who that has witnessed and shared them, but has

longed that they might ever continue? These are hours of happiness to which many look back with longing, when worldliness has chilled the enthusiasm, and care and disappointment cooled the fervour of the inner life. The words of Cowper must often be on the lips of the way-worn Christian—

“Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?”

But even in this there is hope for the believer that the mere worldling cannot know; for to him, when weary and heart-sick, there is a place for him to go. Going back to the fold from which we have wandered, is easier than, late and worn, to seek the way to it. And what an idea of safety and protection the words “fold of Jesus” suggest to us! The discipline of life must be easier and safer for those who have reached that fold early. They have voluntarily chosen whom they would serve, while the choice was left to them; and Jesus has promised that “whosoever should come unto him, he would in no wise cast out.” They have placed their hands in those of their Heavenly Father, and we do not believe He ever lets them go. It seems to us that there is a sense in which the Roman Catholic faith is true—the faith that no baptized soul can be lost, when applied to those who come voluntarily. And so, too, in the doctrines of election and perseverance. That many go astray, cannot alter the feeling of the greater safety in coming; for we do not know with how many the remembrance of the baptismal vow, the recurrence of the rite of communion, has helped to resist temptation, has brought back from wanderings in the ways of sin, has perhaps saved from crime. Nor do we know how much may weigh with our righteous Judge the fact, that the soul so defaced and sin-polluted, once did bring to Him “the answer of a good conscience.”

The experience of life must have a different aspect to those who have taken Jesus for their Master, Guide and Lord. It must at once solemnize, deepen and brighten it. His sympathy must hallow every joy,

sanctify every sorrow, purify and lighten every trial. There may be grief, but no gloom; there may be disappointment, but not despair; there may be tears of penitence and shame for all the backslidings and shortcomings, but Jesus is there to comfort the mourning heart, and lift it up and bid it struggle on. It is surely cause for thankfulness when the young "put on the whole armour of God, that they may be able to withstand in the evil day." And in sight of evil days that may come; in the thought of all the grief that comes from "falling away," the grief that comes from coldness and deadness of heart, the grief that comes when we yield to temptation and sin; in the thought of all that weariness and strife, how do we long to save every young heart from a like experience, by whispering to it the spell that will protect it therefrom! That spell is faithful, daily, earnest prayer. If we would that the altar-fires should not go out, we must watch them constantly and feed them carefully. We read that the wandering Israelites could not gather manna "but for one day at a time;" so must it be with the refreshment our souls draw from the pure fount of God; and Christ teaches us to pray, "Give us *this day* our daily bread." If the young heart would resist every temptation to a neglect of this duty, its life would be safe; for the grace of God would surely be an answer to its fidelity, giving a wisdom that would lead securely. How sad that we call that a duty which should be ever a glorious privilege and delight—to commune with God and Jesus, to lay our hearts open to them, who can have mercy and help our weakness, who can understand us so much more truly than our nearest earthly friend! To whom should we go, when happy, if not to them? to whom, when sorrowful and cast down? to whom, when in temptation, perplexity and doubt, if not to our Master, who, in that he "hath suffered, being tempted, is able to succour them that are tempted"—if not to our Father, "who is willing and able to give us more abundantly than we can ask or think"?

Let the young Christians be determined never to let any device or temptation make them neglect their daily, secret prayer. No occupation can be lawful, no indulgence or pleasure innocent, that shall encroach upon that one thing ; no temper or frame of mind should be allowed, that cannot “be prayed over.”

“And when our hearts are cold and dead,
O help us, Lord, the more.”

Let them not fancy that *doing* good or being good *is* prayer. God does not want your works. He wants your heart, your soul, your affections : and He has them not, if you never *seek* his presence. We oftentimes smile at the prayers of little children, at the simplicity of their petitions. It would be well with us if we could be made partakers of that simplicity. Our hearts would be purer and brighter, and our lives more acceptable. It would seem almost needless to add, that unquestioning obedience to Jesus, through whom our Father speaks to us, must follow prayer. Every action and emotion must be governed by the law of Christ. When the disciples of Jesus pray for truth and earnestness and the spirit of self-sacrifice, let their lives prove the sincerity of their prayer. When they ask for simplicity and singleness of heart, let them walk as becometh the children of God. And thus by prayer and obedience, they “all come unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” We have all read with delight the account of the walk to Emmaus—Jesus and his disciples—“though their eyes were holden that they should not know him.” Have we not wished that he could be by *our* side ? and yet we have a promise greater even than that longing includes ; for Jesus said, “If a man love me, he will keep my words ; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” Does not such condescension deserve that every Christian should strive earnestly that his heart be a temple “fit for the indwelling God” ?

Rev T B W Briggs

BILLINGSHURST ANNIVERSARY.

Do many of the readers of the Messenger know Billingshurst? I expect not. It is not, I believe, one of our ancient churches; there may indeed have been General Baptists worshipping there from an early period of our history, but I cannot trace any notice of Billingshurst church in the Assembly records till 1806, and then it is coupled with Horsham.

Billingshurst is a neat rural village, on the old coach-road from London to Arundel, about forty-two miles from town. There is now communication by railway. It is in a lovely part of Sussex; the view from the house where I have, on recent visits, been hospitably entertained, is enough to make the heart of a Londoner, weary of brick and mortar, leap in him.

We have no district Association to meet at Billingshurst; till last Whitsuntide no friends from Billingshurst had for years come to the Assembly, so that we had nearly lost sight of it, except that the name always appeared in our list next to "Bessels Green."

But a year ago a change took place. A General Baptist minister, the Rev. J. F. Kennard, who had supplied their pulpit for some time on alternate Sundays, was invited to become their pastor, and settled with them at Michaelmas, 1867.

The congregation resolved, I think wisely, to solemnize their minister's entrance on his office by an ordination service, which was held accordingly in the afternoon of Thursday, October 10th. The three Messengers and other ministers took part in the service. It was a bright day in the autumn; and the service was, I believe, felt by us all to be a very solemn and interesting one. It was followed by a social tea-meeting, after which various addresses were delivered, and several hymns sung. Altogether, it was a day to be remembered with devout satisfaction by all who were engaged in it or present at it.

The prayers which were then offered for a blessing on

Mr. Kennard's labours have not been unanswered. There has been no marked change either in the number or the appearance of the congregation, but the good seed of the word has been growing secretly. The people esteem their minister ; it was therefore determined to celebrate the anniversary of his settlement, and I was invited to preach on Sunday, the 27th September, and administer the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

I was pleased to accept the invitation ; and it was the information which I gathered in my visit that has led me to say what I have said about the result of Mr. Kennard's labours. The weather was very fine, and the congregations, both at the morning and evening service, nearly filled the little chapel. But what especially delighted me was the attendance at the Lord's Supper, which I regard as a fair indication of the spiritual life of the church. Of late years, I was told, when the ordinance was administered, which was rarely, the attendance had sunk to five. Since Mr. Kennard's ministry it had risen to fifteen ; and on this occasion twenty-two sat down to commemorate the death of him "who loved us and gave himself for us." It did my heart good to see it.

Next day, there was a social tea-meeting in the chapel, which was filled to overflowing. The Revds. J. W. Braithwaite, of Horsham, and William J. Smyth, of Godalming, came over to take part. After tea, there were addresses from these ministers and other friends present, marked by earnestness and kindly feeling ; there were hymns sung, I trust with heart and voice ; and a few words of prayer were a suitable close to an evening of Christian social enjoyment.

So was kept the first anniversary of Mr. Kennard's settlement.

J. C. M.

ANOTHER ANNIVERSARY.

I must just say a word or two about another anniversary which I attended, that of the General Baptist church

in Praed Street, Paddington. It belongs to the New Connexion. Before 1832, our brethren had only two churches in London, viz., Commercial Road and Great Suffolk Street in the Borough. Some members of the Commercial Road began preaching at Paddington, and in 1832 a church was formed there in New Church Street; and in 1835, by secession from this, a second church was formed, which is now in Praed Street. Both churches are large; the older one, of which Dr. Burns and his son, Rev. J. D. Burns, are pastors, has 521 members; that in Praed Street, 423.

Our limits prevent me from giving an account of the meeting, in which I was invited to take part by the kindness of the minister, the Rev. John Clifford; but there were one or two things to which I would gladly call attention. One was this: that though they had added sixty members to their church during the past year, this was below the average of the ten years of Mr. Clifford's ministry; and a strong resolution was expressed, that, so far as their prayers and labours would prevent it, the deficiency should not again occur. The other was this: that they evidently felt that their great work was the struggle against sin. We sometimes think our "orthodox" brethren are very "sectarian;" but I heard fewer references to "our views," and fewer reflections, expressed or implied, on other bodies, than I frequently hear at meetings of people who claim to be more liberal.

J. C. M.

Published by E. T. WHITFIELD, 178, Strand.

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No. 3. Vol. I.

APRIL, 1869.

Price 1d.

HOW OUR GENERAL BAPTIST CHURCHES
WERE PLANTED AND HOW THEY GREW.

CHAP. II.—THOMAS LAMB'S COADJUTORS, HENRY DENNE AND SAMUEL OATES—OTHER LONDON MINISTERS, JOHN GRIFFITH, JOHN GOSNOLD, EDWARD BARBER, SAMUEL LOVEDAY—EXECUTION OF JOHN JAMES.

Two of Mr. Lamb's coadjutors deserve especial notice. The first is Mr. Henry Denne. He had been educated at the University of Cambridge, which he left in 1630, and having been ordained as a clergyman of the Church of England, obtained the living of Pirton, near Hitchin, in Hertfordshire, where he laboured acceptably for ten years. In 1643 he was led to change his views, and professed himself a Baptist, and, having been baptized, became a member of Mr. Lamb's church.

By this church he was at once sent out to preach in Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire; and mainly, it would appear, through his labours, several General Baptist churches arose in those parts. Though for a time imprisoned (A.D. 1644-45), first in Cambridge and afterwards in London, he obtained his release; and after preaching in London, and at Rochester and elsewhere in Kent, was appointed minister of Eltisley, in Cambridgeshire, between Cambridge and St. Neots, through the influence of the Disbrowe family, who had befriended him in his imprisonment. The parochial livings were now, by the success of the Parliament, open to others than Episcopalians. The Disbrowes were connected with Cromwell, and Denne, besides his living, obtained some

temporary appointments. It was probably before entering upon his ministerial labours in this parish, in June, 1646, he incurred a short imprisonment at Spalding, in Lincolnshire, on a charge of baptizing four persons in the river Welland, near that town.

Our next notice of him is very remarkable, indicating at once the excited condition of the times, and perhaps the restless character of the man. In 1649 he was in the army, a cornet of horse, and engaged in the mutiny of the Levellers occasioned by the reluctance of the soldiers to embark for Ireland, on Cromwell's appointment to conduct the war there. The mutineers, a thousand strong, under Cornet Tompson, marched from Salisbury, but were pursued and surprised by Fairfax and Cromwell at Burford, in Oxfordshire, at midnight, about the middle of May, 1649. Four of the leaders were at once condemned to be shot, Denne being one of the four. The scene is thus graphically described in a newspaper of the time, quoted by Dr. Underhill in his biographical sketch of Denne, prefixed to the *Records of the Fenstanton Church*, published by "the Hanserd Knollys Society."

"Saturday, May 19th.—This day also came intelligence of the surprisal of the revolted troops about Burford, in Oxfordshire, they being twelve troops were all taken; very few escaped, some of the chief of which were immediately condemned to suffer death, viz. Cornet Tompson and Cornet Den, or as we call him, Parson Den, and two corporals, Church and Perkins; these being found guilty upon the articles of mutiny, are thereupon adjudged to die. Cornet Den being a man of parts, and one who had been esteemed for piety and honesty, received his sentence with great manliness and fortitude of spirit, yet with so much relenting and acknowledgment of the just hand of God, the justice of the sentence, and his submission thereunto, that he seemed to rejoice with willingness to suffer under so righteous a sentence, and he professed openly, that though his heart could not accuse him of an evil meaning, yet was he convinced of the evil of the action and dangerous consequences of it; that if they had but continued three or four days longer, the land had been plunged in misery and ruin, and that the invasion of the Scots and insurrections in Wales and other parts of the nation, last year, was not so hazardous as this.

"The four condemned persons were one after another brought to the place of execution, in the sight of the rest of the soldiers.

Cornet Tompson, brother to him called Captain Tompson, a declared rebel by the Parliament, was the first that suffered. He said not much at his death, the man in outward appearance having little of God in him ; only he confessed the judgment was righteous, and that God was offended with his disobedience, whereof he was guilty. The two corporals (Church and Perkins) died, saying very little or nothing before their death. Cornet Den being called out, came with much composure of spirit, expecting to die, but the General having commanded the Lieutenant-General Cromwell to let him know at the place of execution that his Excellency had extended mercy to him, he soberly and suddenly replied : ‘I am not worthy of such a mercy ; I am more ashamed to live than afraid to die,’—weeping bitterly.”

After this narrow escape, Mr. Denne published a tract, “*The Leveller’s Designe Discovered*,” addressed to his fellow-soldiers, setting forth the grounds of the mutiny, and lamenting the steps which he had concurred in taking.

From this time we hear little of him. In 1653, we find him connected with the church at Fenstanton, in Huntingdonshire, near St. Ives, one of those apparently which originated in his former missionary labours, and of which his elder son, John Denne, was the first pastor. By that church he was now ordained “a Messenger to divulge the gospel of Jesus Christ ;” and having in his missionary labours visited Kent, was invited by the General Baptist church at Canterbury to settle with them, which he consequently did. In 1658, he had a controversial discussion in the church of St. Clement Danes, London, with Dr. Gunning, afterwards Bishop successively of Chichester and of Ely. He also wrote in defence of the Quakers and of Bunyan, against Mr. Thomas Smith, of Cambridge. “You seem,” said he, “to be angry with the Tinker because he strives to mend souls as well as kettles and pans.” In this tract he contends for the perfect toleration of Roman Catholics, a rare stretch of liberality in those days. He died apparently about 1661. A friend, a clergyman, is said to have written this epitaph on him—

“To tell his wisdom, learning, goodness, unto men,
I need say no more ; but here lies Henry Denne.”

Beside the tracts mentioned above, he wrote several other pieces. One of these, entitled, "*Grace, Mercy and Peace, containing 1, God's Reconciliation to Man; 2, Man's Reconciliation to God,*" is reprinted by the Hanserd Knollys Society at the end of the volume containing the *Fenstanton Records*. It was probably written in 1645, and published about that time "for the benefit of the city of Rochester."

The other member of Mr. Lamb's congregation whom I shall mention is Mr. Samuel Oates, whose history shews the readiness of those in authority to persecute, and of the mob to outrage, our General Baptist forefathers. He was not apparently a man of learning, being in business as a weaver, but possessed good natural abilities, and was an acute disputant and an acceptable preacher, labouring with good success in 1645 and 1646 in the counties of Surrey, Sussex and Essex. In the last-named county he baptized a young woman who died a few weeks afterwards. An inquest was held on the body; but the magistrates did not wait for the verdict, but committed him to Colchester jail to take his trial for murder! Here he was visited by so many friends (many of whom came down "in coaches" from London, shewing that they were persons of substance) that the magistrates forbade their admission. At his trial, however, it was so clearly shewn that the young woman had been in good health for several days after her baptism, that the jury acquitted him, and he at once resumed his ministerial labours. Some weeks after, he was seized by the mob at Dunmow, in Essex, and thrown into the little river Chelmer, which runs by the town.

It is stated that he became afterwards pastor of a church in Lincolnshire; but it is not said when or where. After the Restoration of the Stuarts in 1660, he was induced by the promises of the Duke of York, afterwards James the Second, to conform to the Established Church, and was presented to the benefice of Hastings. But his preferment could not stifle the voice

of conscience, which reproached him with his apostasy. Stung by its reproaches, he gave up his benefice and returned to his Baptist friends, and being re-admitted to membership with Mr. Lamb's church, continued in connexion with it until his death.

Another worthy labourer in London was Mr. John Griffith, who began to preach and collect a church in Dunning's Alley, Bishopsgate Street,* in 1640, and six years after was ordained its pastor, and continued in charge of it till his death at a very advanced age in 1700. He was an active and esteemed minister, an advocate for the practice of laying hands on the newly baptized, a practice about which our people were much divided in sentiment, and with regard to which their mutual intolerance led at times to painful separations. In 1661, he published "*A Complaint of the Oppressed against the Oppressor*," in which he gives an account of the persecutions to which the Baptists were then subject. He was himself soon afterwards apprehended and committed to Newgate, where he was kept for seventeen months. He was afterwards repeatedly imprisoned; and altogether spent "fourteen years in sufferings, bonds and imprisonment for his Lord, and the testimony of a good conscience." In 1683, he was imprisoned for three years or more for refusing to take the oath of allegiance, his reasons for which refusal he stated clearly and temperately. During his imprisonment he received contributions from some of our churches, which "remembered those in bonds as being bound with them." Three other Baptist ministers were imprisoned in Newgate at the same time; viz. Mr. Lawrence Wise, who was a clergyman ejected by the Act of Uniformity from the living of Chatham, in Kent, and became a minister of a General Baptist church in Goodman's Fields; and Messrs. Hercules Collins and Francis Bampfield, who were Particular Baptists. Mr. Bampfield died

* The Sunday-school belonging to my congregation in Worship Street was shortly after its commencement held in a room which we rented in Dunning's Alley, which is not far from Worship Street.

in prison in 1684. Mr. Griffith published two discourses, "*God's Oracle and Christ's Doctrine*," an exposition of Heb. vi. 1, 2, and "*A Treatise touching Falling from Grace*." They were republished in 1707, "carefully revised, improved and enlarged," by Joseph Jenkins, minister of a General Baptist church in Hart Street, Covent Garden.

After Mr. Griffith died, a Mr. Robert Jemmet became minister, but the church in Dunning's Alley disappears from notice early in the last century, and probably became extinct. The name of Jemmet remained among us; for an Isaac Jemmet either bought the land on which my own chapel in Worship Street now stands, for the congregation, or gave it to them. He died in 1780, the year the chapel was opened.

John Gosnold was educated at the Charter-house School, London, and at Pembroke College, Cambridge. In early life he was chaplain to Lord Gray, but during the civil wars became a General Baptist, and gathered a church which met for nearly a hundred and twenty years in Paul's Alley, Barbican, in a building said to have been built for a play-house, but which the government of the time would not license. It was an anticipation of Spurgeon's Tabernacle, being computed to hold three thousand people, and was generally crowded. A pew was appropriated to six or seven clergymen who generally attended his lectures. He was much esteemed by some persons of rank and influence; and it was probably through their efforts that in the fitful persecutions of the reign of Charles the Second, the iron hand of authority fell less heavily on him than on some of his fellows. Perhaps his own gentle and liberal spirit conduced to the same result. Though he left the Establishment, he retained the friendship of many of its members, and was especially intimate with Tillotson, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, whose weekly lecture he attended. Yet even this good man was troubled; he was sometimes obliged to conceal himself for fear of informers, and his congregation was frequently disturbed. These persecutions did not, however, sour their temper

or narrow their sympathies. After the great Fire of London in 1666, the overseers of the parish (Cripple-gate) applied to the congregation, who made a collection for the poor of £50, equal probably to £200 at the present time, and continued to make a collection for them for the next twenty years. Mr. Gosnold died in 1678, in his fifty-third year, and was buried in Bunhill Fields, the great cemetery of the London Dissenters. He was the author of two small treatises, "*The Doctrine of Baptism*," and "*On Laying on of Hands*."

On his death, Mr. Thomas Plant was chosen to succeed him. His zeal and popularity caused him to be bitterly persecuted. The meeting-house was attacked and the seats destroyed, by order of Lord Bridgewater, who resided near. Nine warrants, it is said, were out against the minister at one time; and he was compelled to disguise himself, which he did so cleverly that even his own congregation did not know him. Perhaps they winked a little; and considering how many disapproved of the persecuting measures of the party now dominant at court, it is likely that those who had to execute the warrants had no warm desire to find their victim. He seems to have been the only General Baptist who went to court to thank James the Second for his declaration of indulgence in 1687. He died in 1693.

I shall have occasion to mention this church again, and will now only mention that though in 1695 it united with and absorbed the General Baptist church meeting in Turners' Hall, yet in the course of the next century it declined to such a degree that in 1768 it determined to dissolve, giving up possession of the meeting-house to the General Baptist church previously meeting in Glass-house Yard, Goswell Street, with which it recommended its members to unite in fellowship,—advice which it is likely most of them followed. This Glass-house Yard church is the one now in Worship Street, under my own charge; so that I may, in some degree, reckon good, pious, gentle, large-hearted John Gosnold among my predecessors.

Another of the early founders of our churches was

Edward Barber. I cannot find any account of his early years, and know not whether he is to be counted among our learned ministers, or among those good men who, strong in natural gifts and in devout zeal, have rendered our churches good service at all times. Be that as it may, he was in 1641 already pastor of a General Baptist church at the Spital in Bishopsgate Street, the exact position of which I cannot ascertain, but which has given name to the parish of Spitalfields, the great seat of the silk manufacture established half a century later by the French Protestant refugees. In this year, 1641, Barber was imprisoned, and remained in prison nearly a year, for publishing a book, in which he asserted that "our Lord Christ appointed dipping, and that the sprinkling of children is not according to Christ's institution." He further denied that the payment of tithes to the clergy was a divine institution under the gospel dispensation. He afterwards laboured in spreading the gospel in country places, especially in Kent. In 1644, he and Mr. Lamb, of Bell Alley, already mentioned, were the leaders of the General Baptists in a discussion with the Particular Baptists on Predestination. The time of his death is not known. Adam Taylor says that he was succeeded in 1674 by Jonathan Jennings; and he places the removal of the church to White's Alley, Moorfields, about the same time. I suspect that Barber's death may have occurred much earlier. His name is not among the signatures to the Confession of 1660, of which I shall speak presently, but Jennings's is.

This church at the Spital has continued to the present day. My first settlement in the ministry was as pastor of it, successively at Trinity Place and Coles Street, in the borough of Southwark. It is now located at Peckham, a suburb of London, under the pastoral care of the Rev. John Marten.

Several other churches were founded in London, among which was that in Glass-house Yard, Goswell Street, which is now my own church in Worship Street. Of the date of its foundation I find no record, neither of the name of its founder or first pastor. It appears

to have been in existence "several years" in 1681, and was probably founded in the time of the civil war or of the Commonwealth, when nearly all of our London churches originated. It may, however, have been an offshoot, in Charles the Second's time, from one of our older churches. I find only one clear instance of a General Baptist church formed in London between the Restoration of Charles II. and the Revolution of 1688, and that was formed by the peaceable separation of a previously existing branch of another church. Thomas Kirby became minister of Glass-house Yard just about the time of the Revolution.

I have mentioned by anticipation the absorption in 1768 by this Glass-house Yard church, of the church in Paul's Alley, Barbican, which had itself previously absorbed the church in Turners' Hall. This church in Turners' Hall was very short-lived. It originated in a schism in the White's Alley church, which insisted on the laying of hands on the newly baptized. One of their members, Richard Allen, a frequent, able and acceptable preacher among them, and a sufferer for conscience' sake (having been imprisoned in Newgate and fined for preaching), objected to this being made a condition of church fellowship, and was on that account in 1688 suspended from preaching. On this he opened a place of worship at Turners' Hall,* in Philpot Lane, and formed a church, which in 1695 united with the Paul's Alley church, Barbican, then without a minister. Mr. Allen became one of the ministers of the Barbican church.

A Mr. John Clayton, or Claton, of whom I can learn nothing, gathered a church at Shad Thames, in the borough of Southwark. This was probably in the time

* Many of the incorporated trades or guilds of the city of London allowed their Halls to be used as places of worship, or allowed meeting-houses (as they were then always called) to be built close to them and named after them. Thus there were Turners' Hall, Pinners' Hall, Haberdashers' Hall, Founders' Hall, and Salters' Hall; the last of which and its eloquent minister, Hugh Worthington, are vividly retained by me among the memories of my boyhood.

of the Commonwealth, for Clayton's name is among the signatures to the Confession of 1660. This church had a branch in "the Park" (so called from having been anciently the Park attached to the Bishop of Winchester's palace), also in Southwark; which branch in or about 1674 became a separate church. The original church, which still contained one hundred and fifty members, removed in 1687 to the Barge House at Dockhead, and not long afterwards (before 1693) to a new meeting-house built by them in Fair Street, Horslydown. Shad Thames, Dockhead and Horslydown, are near together in an obscure but busy and densely peopled part of London.

In the persecution of the closing years of Charles the Second, Mr. Clayton suffered imprisonment, and several of his hearers were fined. This was in 1683; and four years afterwards they were driven from their meeting-house, and for a short time obliged to meet in a private house. This was just before their removal to Dockhead.

This church is still in existence and meets at Deptford, under the pastoral care of the Rev. M. C. Gascoigne, in an ancient meeting-house built for another church, founded apparently during the Protectorate, but which had become nearly or quite extinct. The survivors or representatives of this church delivered over its meeting-house to the Horslydown church at the beginning of the present century.

The branch church in the Park is still in existence and in a flourishing condition. It belongs to "the New Connexion" of General Baptists, and meets in the Borough Road, Southwark, in a chapel that will hold above a thousand people and is usually well filled. The minister is the Rev. James Harcourt.

During the time of the Commonwealth, there was a General Baptist church on Tower Hill, under the pastoral care of Mr. Samuel Loveday, by whom it was probably gathered, and who is said to have been "a learned, pious and very serious minister of the gospel;" not given to controversy, of exemplary piety and humility, whose very reproofs were so affectionate as usually to disarm

the offender: a kindred soul, in fact, to worthy John Gosnold. He died about 1685, and was succeeded the year after by Mr. John Maulden, who was bitterly persecuted for Nonconformity, being fined £20 a month for not going to church! His goods were seized to satisfy this fine, and himself committed to prison till released by King James's proclamations of indulgence in 1687. The congregation had removed from Tower Hill soon after the Restoration, to a meeting-house built by them somewhere in Goodman's Fields.

This church is still in existence and flourishing. Like the Park church, it belongs to the New Connexion. They have lately chosen as their minister the Rev. J. G. Pike, grandson and namesake of the author of a well-known book, "*Persuasives to Early Piety*."

A small Seventh-day General Baptist church, that is, a church which observed the seventh day (Saturday) as the Sabbath, existed at the Restoration of Charles the Second in Bull-stake Alley, Whitechapel; the pastor of which, Mr. John James, was dragged out of his pulpit, towards the end of 1661, on a charge of speaking treasonable words against the King, and committed to Newgate; and those of his hearers who refused to take the oath of allegiance were also committed to prison. Mr. James was brought to trial for high treason and condemned to death, on evidence of the most unreliable character. Of any purpose of attacking the government he was clearly innocent; but it is likely, from his own words at his trial, that he held the principles of the Fifth-monarchy men. The court wanted a victim, and his fate was sealed. The King, with a coarse brutality at variance with his usual manner, repulsed the efforts of the poor man's wife to intercede for her unhappy husband; and the ministers of the law were allowed to treat him with unfeeling harshness and to attempt the grossest extortion; to which he replied with singular meekness and composure. His conduct at his trial, in the interval before his execution, and at the gallows, was marked by remarkable firmness and pious submission; and his death, with its accompanying brutalities, was one of the

darkest acts of a period which every enlightened Englishman now blushes to recal.

This church still exists in Mill Yard, Goodman's Fields, under the pastorate of the Rev. W. H. Black, and was, till quite recently, in union with our Assembly.

Other General Baptist churches existed in the days of the Commonwealth and later : one in the Old Jewry, under Jeremiah Ives ; one at High Hall, near West Smithfield, under Dr. William Russell ; and one in Coleman Street, under a Thomas Lamb, who must not be confounded with his namesake, mentioned above as founder of the church in Bell Alley. Ives and Russell were famous for their skill in controversy. Lamb became a Baptist in 1653, and was re-converted to infant baptism in 1657 or 1658 by the eminent Richard Baxter. Another church in Hart Street, Covent Garden, was formed from those members of the other London churches who lived westward, but this was not till after the Revolution.

————— *Rev. J C Means*

"COME UNTO ME."

(Matt. xi. 28.)

COME to me, all ye that labour,
Heavy laden and opprest ;
All with doubt and care who waver,
Come, and I will give you rest !

Come and take my yoke upon you ;
Wretched sinner, sore distrest,
Cast your gloomy doubtings from you ;
Come, and I will give you rest !

Come, for I am meek and lowly ;
Let no fears your souls molest :
Welcome here ! tho' vile, unholy,
Come, and I will give you rest !

Come, oh wait not for to-morrow,
Weary, overburden'd breast !
Hither bring your heavy sorrow :
Come, and I will give you rest !

D. B. Atchello

GOD IN CHRIST.

“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself” (2 Cor. v. 19).

THE purpose of majestic benignity was so manifest in the act, that the wonder is it could be misapprehended. Men were to understand, as they never otherwise could have understood, what their invisible Father really was, and how infinitely He loved them, even in their sins. They were to learn, in a way inexpressibly subduing, that there was nothing which He was not prepared to do, in order that they might be reconciled and redeemed. They were to behold in a human impersonation an image of divine majesty, purity, wisdom and love ; and be drawn to it in spite of themselves. They had forsaken God, but God shall stoop to go after them. Separation from Him was perdition. His restored presence alone, freely recognized and welcomed once more by them, could bring back life to their deserted and dying natures. Hence, and only hence, the great God meekly put Himself before men, and in a humble form came near to their homes and to their souls, as near as it was possible for Him to come. In one like themselves He came near ; in one who went in and out among them, one who had human thoughts and human ways, human sympathies and feelings, human experiences like theirs, He came. Only life can kindle life. The Life, the one Source of all life in the universe, the eternally living Being, came near to a dead world, to touch it, to breathe upon it, to infuse Himself into it, and to quicken it for ever. It was the divine in Jesus that was power over the souls of men while he lived on earth. It is the divine in Jesus that now is, and that shall continue to be, power over the souls of men. Our deepest need is God ; our ruin, our perdition, is disseverance from God ; our redemption is the indwelling of God in our nature. Therefore it was that our Father humbled Himself, sacrificed Himself, to come near to us in Christ ; to let us see, as with our very bodily eyes, and to make us feel the love of his heart. Therefore it was that He so

subduingly appealed to us, and was prepared to respond to the faintest lingering sense of the divine that might lie dormant within, to recreate it where it had seemed utterly perished, and to satisfy it with Himself. Very God incarnated Himself in Christ, the Christ who lived and died on this earth. It was God who looked forth on men through the eyes of Christ, God who spoke to men through the voice of Christ, God who beamed on men from the face of Christ. It was God, his majesty and power, his purity and wisdom, his abhorrence of evil and infinite pity for evil-doers, his gentleness and patience, his meekness and his boundless mercy, which were unveiled throughout the whole life and in the whole spirit of Christ. The very heart of God, in its deepest fountains, was laid open and was seen to gush forth in the tears and in the life-blood of Christ. Christ was full of God ; up to the highest limit of the capacity of a pure human soul ; Christ was full of God, breathing out, streaming forth, brimming over with the divine ; that the divine through his medium (mediation) might re-enter men's souls, and might subdue and quicken and restore them. And it did ; as a simple matter of fact, it did.—*The Life and Light of Men*, by John Young, LL.D.

OUR AMERICAN "CHRISTIAN" BRETHREN.

SINCE the renewal of our communication with the Christian denomination in America, a new interest in their welfare has been excited among us ; an interest much increased by the presence in our Assembly, two years ago, of the Rev. Daniel W. Moore, as delegate from their body.

The communication thus renewed has been maintained ever since by letter, and especially by the transmission of publications. The writer of this receives regularly from its editor, the Christian newspaper, "The Herald of Gospel Liberty," of which he has been an occasional, though unfrequent, correspondent. The account of our

early churches, which is now appearing in our own pages, was written for the Herald and first appeared in it.

A mass of intelligence has been thus received, but in such a form as to make it very difficult of use in the Messenger ; for the items, as in all religious newspapers, derive much of their interest from local and personal knowledge. I think, however, I shall interest my readers if I give a description of the contents of the last number which I received, that for Feb. 20th, 1869.

Let me preface this description by one or two statements. The "Christians" are strongest in the new and thriving states of the north-west, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Michigan, extending westward beyond the Mississippi, and northward across the Canadian frontier. There are several churches in the eastern and central States ; but the above-named four States are their stronghold.

They had, till lately, two newspapers : "The Gospel Herald," published at Newburyport, in Massachusetts, under the editorship of the Rev. D. P. Pike ; and "The Herald of Gospel Liberty," published at Dayton, in Ohio, under the editorship of the Rev. H. Y. Rush. The first has been given up, or rather combined with the second, Messrs. Pike and Rush being joint editors.

They have a college, "Union Christian College," at Merom, in Indiana, and they share with the Unitarians, "Antioch College," at Yellow Springs, in Ohio. They are also about to open a "Biblical Institute," of which one of their most esteemed ministers, Dr. Austin Craig, heretofore one of the professors of Antioch College, has been appointed President. Dr. Craig was appointed to correspond with us when Mr. Moore was chosen to visit us as their delegate ; and is further known to many of us by his beautiful sermon, "A Visit to Bethlehem," which we reprinted.

I proceed now to the abstract of the paper. "The Herald of Gospel Liberty" is a sheet of four pages. The first page consists of miscellaneous articles, not of intelligence. The first two articles are poetical ; then follows a longer article ("to be continued"), apparently the first part of a sermon, with the text omitted, entitled,

"The Discipline of Sorrow, or the Advantage of Affliction." This is followed by "The Main Point," "Home, Sweet Home," "A Short Sermon," really a business-like address in support of the new Biblical Institute, and "Our Bible Class;" a Bible lesson, with questions appended, suited to young people. Then we have "A Great Want," censuring the negligence shewn in the lists kept and reported of church members, and suggesting some reforms; an extract, entitled, "Irritability," from a paper by Mrs. H. B. Stowe in "The Atlantic Monthly;" a series of "Newspaper Blunders;" a "History of Pews;" and an extract, headed "Away from the Brink," a caveat against Romanism, from "The Protestant Churchman," very short, and the only controversial piece on the page.

The greater part of these articles are ethical or devotional; two of them relate to denominational affairs; two others, both short, are miscellaneous; and only one, very short, is controversial.

The first half of the second page consists of similar articles to those on the first page. They are, "Denominational Needs;" "Man as he was—Saved Fallen Man in his Future State;" and "Christ Jesus made no Mistakes." Then we have, "Religious Items," various short articles of intelligence, nearly all relating to other denominations, of which I give a few, condensed.

The premiums on the pews in Plymouth church, Brooklyn (Rev. Henry Ward Beecher's), amount this year to £8000, and the pew and chair rents to £2540, together £10,540, being £1000 in advance of last year.*

India now contains 200,000 Protestant Christians.

The entire Christian world gave about £1,000,000 to foreign missions last year.

During the past ten years, the Rev. R. B. Desronhes, a Baptist missionary to the French in Michigan, has baptized a hundred and fifty Romanists at Detroit. Not one has returned to the Church of Rome.

Sixteen ladies are studying divinity at Oberlin College.

* I have reduced the American currency to English.

In seven Unitarian places of worship in Boston the sittings are free. The next step will be to dispense with exclusive choir singing.

Of 317 Unitarian churches in the United States, 174 are in the single State of Massachusetts.

The intelligence of their own Christian churches is given in the second and third pages. There have been several revival meetings, of which I gather these results : 145 persons have "made the good profession," or "professed religion," or "confessed the Saviour;" 201 have become church members ; 8 have been reclaimed ; and a new church, with 29 members and more expected, has been gathered ; 32 persons have been baptized ; and 47 are vaguely reported as "additions" or "had joined."

At some of these meetings, Baptists and Methodists united harmoniously with the Christians ; and at Bethlehem, in Ohio, where sixty were added to the church, the result of one meeting is thus described :

"The moral influence moves the whole community. Young men of easy habits have become moral reformers. A world of iniquity in the form of two tippling-shops near the church has been dried up, and a general spirit of religious reform speaks louder than words of the influence of their faithful and exemplary Elder Wm. Pangburn ; while the vast multitudes of religious people, flowing in by hundreds from every road and avenue, prove the labours of the venerable Elder M. Gardner for the last forty years have not been in vain. Elder Garoutte and brother J. Hawk assisted in the meeting."

Our brethren do not use the prefix "Reverend," but describe their ministers as "Elder."

The "Correspondence" contains, among others, a short communication from our friend the Rev. D. W. Moore on "Confessing Christ," but otherwise calls for no remark. One feature of the paper is characteristic : it is the acknowledgment by Elders, and sometimes by their wives also, of "Donations," or presents in money or goods. These are usually given at a social meeting held at the house of one of the brethren. One acknowledgment is of "numerous greenbacks, pork, beef, mutton, wood, hay, and articles too numerous to mention, to the amount of one hundred dollars (£20) a year, over and above my regular salary for the last three years."

The fourth page contains a report of the "Michigan State Christian Convention," of which our friend the Rev. D. W. Moore was appointed Secretary, and also delegate to the "United States Convention of all Religious Denominations," to be held in New York next October. This report is followed by the minutes of the "Indiana Central Conference" and "Southern Wabash Conference." Each Conference sat for three days: to the first, six churches reported that they had 10 ministers or occasional preachers and 460 members; to the second, twelve churches reported 8 ministers and 644 members; but two of these churches did not give the number of their members, and two other churches were admitted to union with the Conference.

Remember, these are the contents of only one number, though an unusually full one, of a weekly newspaper.

Rev^d J C Means

THE LATE REV. EDWARD TALBOT.

A GOOD man has passed on into the nearer presence of our God, the Rev. EDWARD TALBOT, of Tenterden, in Kent. Though not of our body, he was well known to many of our members; for Tenterden lies near to several of our churches, and Mr. Talbot usually attended our Associations when they were within his reach, and his conduct towards us was always fair and kind. His only ministerial settlement was at Tenterden, where he ministered for forty years, first as colleague, then as successor to the excellent and much-revered Laurence Holden. Tenterden has been favoured in its ministers.

During a twelve years' ministry in Kent, the writer of this brief notice saw much of Mr. Talbot; and though differing from him in many opinions, was always enabled to work harmoniously with him. He ever felt, and had reason to feel, great personal regard for him; and now that he is gone, has satisfaction in penning this brief but cordial tribute to his memory.

Mr. Talbot died suddenly, from an affection of the heart, on Sunday, 3rd of January last, soon after he

had preached and administered the Lord's Supper. To his widow and five orphan children this sudden removal must have been a painful shock indeed : to himself, prepared as he was, so quick a passage from the table of the Lord below to the presence of the Lord above may surely be regarded as "a crowning mercy."

J. C. M.

THE APPROACHING ASSEMBLY.

WHAT is our Assembly for? What is the use of it? are questions which may come to the minds of some of our friends. At any rate, they are worth answering.

We come together then for mutual consultation and encouragement as representatives of a great principle. Almost all sects represent a principle, and the principle is commonly worthy of respect, though its advocates may have distorted it or exaggerated it. Thus Methodism embodies the principle of the renewal of the soul by the gospel; Calvinism, the principle of the absolute sovereignty of God; Romanism, that of the authority of the Church. What, then, is our General Baptist principle?

It is this : the consecration of each individual soul to Christ and to God in him. We are to come to Christ, and we are to come each for himself. This is our great central principle. As we recognize and feel its power, we shall thrive; as we neglect it, we shall decline.

In view then of the coming Assembly, let our churches all realize this great principle. Let it animate their letters, which should be an expression of the soul of their church. Let them think how they can help our other churches, or how our other churches can help them, and give expression to their thoughts; for one of our objects is to consider how we can best help one another.

Again, let them choose suitable representatives, and as many as they can. They must be Baptists, or by our constitution they cannot be recognized. Let them be earnest, thoughtful men; and if such are too poor to

defray their travelling charges, small as these are in the present day, let a collection be made to bear them. Let our churches send us their best men.

Once more, let them send a contribution to our several funds, for these exist for their benefit. Let them not fear to lessen their own resources by their contributions. It is truly said, "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." And if the gift is small, not from want of will but of power, let them not be ashamed to give it. Our Lord's highest commendations were bestowed on the widow's mite, and on her of whom he said, "She hath done what she could."

Lastly, let the letter be written before Whit-Sunday and posted at once. This will facilitate the arrangement of the business and redeem time. Let representatives, if they can, come up on Monday, and attend the open meeting of the Committee in the afternoon, and of the Juvenile Fund in the evening. Both are held at Worship Street. Let them attend the early prayer meeting on the Assembly morning; or let them at least be present at the time of commencing business. Need it be pointed out how much the interest of the Assembly is injured by the letters being delivered in the course of the morning, and the representatives dropping in during the day, as is too much the case now.

It is to be desired that we could have, like our brethren of the New Connexion, a celebration of the Lord's Supper, and a meeting for conference and prayer. The delegates to the Association at Derby last year were more impressed with these than by any of the other meetings.

Rev J C Means

Published by E. T. WHITFIELD, 178, Strand.

Packets of four or more copies sent post free, or 25 copies for 1s. 6d., by application to Mr. T. N. DYER, 3, Weldon Terrace, St. James's Road, Bermondsey, London, S.E.; to whom also all payments are to be made. Quarterly payments are desired.

THE
GENERAL BAPTIST MESSENGER.

No. 4. Vol. I.

JULY, 1869.

Price 1d.

THE GENERAL BAPTIST ASSEMBLY.

I INCLUDE all our own Whitsuntide Meetings under this one heading ; for although they are not all strictly parts of the Assembly, they are so connected with it, that they may be most suitably comprehended with it in one narrative.

We made a change last year in ordaining it as a fixed rule, that the Committee should meet at three o'clock on Whit-Monday, and that all members of the Assembly should be free to participate in its deliberations both by speaking and voting. But though the rule takes effect this year, it has produced little result as yet. We have indeed some country members of the Committee, who can seldom be with us at other times ; but only one member of the Assembly, not a Committee-man, is present, and he abstains from taking any part in what is going on.

Proceedings in Committee are "private and confidential ;" but I may give an account of their general character. The draft of the Committee's Report is read, and the resolutions which it is intended to propose are also read or their purpose stated. Report and resolutions are altered, enlarged, or omitted, as the Committee think they severally need alteration or enlargement or omission. But not many changes are made ; for the Secretary is an old hand, and knows pretty well beforehand what the Committee desire and will approve. And there are the appointments for next year. Shall Mr.

A. or Mr. B. be nominated as preacher? Or will not Mr. C. be better than either? And when that is settled, who shall be Moderators? with regard to which we prudently determine to wait till the morning, and see who are present when the time comes for proceeding to business.

So we get through our business, and adjourn from the minister's vestry, where we have been sitting in solemn conclave, to the chapel, where, in the table-pew and on the adjoining benches, our friends are gathering for the meeting of the General Baptist Juvenile Fund. Tea has been carefully and well provided by the care of the young people of the Worship Street congregation, and we all sit down to partake of it in the very happiest of moods.

The Juvenile Fund was established more than forty years ago, as an auxiliary to what was then called "The Missionary, Tract, and Committee Fund," but is now known as "The Assembly Fund." The auxiliary was to be principally supported by young people, and the money collected was to be paid over to the principal fund: but it has since laid aside its auxiliary character, and its proceeds are distributed by the members at the annual meeting, or expended under the direction of its Committee. The record of its establishment is now before me, and awakens the recollection of many who have "passed on." Of twelve persons whose names appear in that record, only three survive; and one of these, with two others who, though not named, were present, is at this year's meeting. Of course, they are no longer juvenile: indeed, the number of gray heads commonly seen at this meeting has occasioned some good-humoured jokes in former years.

In truth, the meeting is really a pleasant re-union of those members of the Assembly who are already in town, and are within reach of the place of meeting. It is a time of hand-shaking and other friendly greeting, of mutual kind inquiries after wives and children and common friends. It is a small meeting; there are present

from fifteen or twenty, and all known to each other ; or if a stranger is here, he is soon recognized or introduced and welcomed. There are some young people, though not so many as one would like to see : and there is some business, though not much ; and it is made the most of. Collections of from five shillings to thirty are paid in, and the Treasurer is kept for some time busy making the entries and counting the money ; and when the receiving is over, the amount at the disposal of the meeting is declared, and the distribution begins. Grants of a sovereign here, and of two sovereigns there, are gravely discussed, and usually agreed to. Not always, however : this case does not come within the scope of the society, and the grant cannot be made, whatever may be our regard for the brother who is interested ; in another case the amount proposed is more than our funds will allow or the urgency of the case requires, and we shake our heads and decide to give half of what has been proposed.

But I have not said who are present. Let us look round and see. There is the Chairman, Mr. Alfred J. Marchant, one of brother John Marten's flock at Peckham, and Mr. Tom Dyer, the Secretary and Treasurer (we combine the two offices in one person), and they are still juveniles, as are several others, belonging for the most part to Worship Street. Then, again, there are our venerable brother Titus Lloyd, of Nottage (who has come up from South Wales to hear his son, who is to be our preacher to-morrow), and our brethren Samuel Martin, of Trowbridge, and John Marten, of Peckham, and Rix, of Stratford, and the writer—it's a good many years since either of us was a juvenile—and Thomas Briggs, of Dover, and F. R. Young, of Swindon, whom we will call the middle-aged brethren ; and E. R. Grant, of Portsmouth, and John B. Lloyd, of Wareham, who are young enough to be quite in place at the meeting of the Juvenile Fund.

And now we have done our work. We have heard and received the Committee's Report, made several

grants both of money and tracts, expressed our desire for a new tract on Baptism, voted our thanks to our worthy young Secretary and Treasurer, and re-appointed him and the Committee, except one obstinate old member, who would go off, declaring that it was a burlesque to appoint him, an old man of nearly seventy, on the Committee of the Juvenile Fund. We had begun the meeting with old John Newton's well-known hymn,

“Kindred in Christ, for his dear sake,
A hearty welcome here receive ;
May we together now partake
The joys which only he can give ;”

and with prayer by our dear brother Samuel Martin—long may he be spared to lead our devotions!—and now it is time to go home, and we close with another hymn, the one composed during his last illness by H. F. Lyte, to whom our later hymn-books owe so much. It is not precisely the hymn for the occasion ; but its devout tenderness has won our hearts, and we must have it :

“Abide with me ! fast falls the eventide ;
The darkness deepens ; Lord, with me abide !
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me !”

We have sung it through to the last line—“In life and death, O Lord, abide with me”—and we part and go home to meet again to-morrow morning.

A very pleasant meeting has this been, like all its predecessors for long years back. A kindly prelude to the more serious work of the next day. But while admitting that, I feel that something more is wanted, something that shall go deep into the hearts of our young people, and that they shall remember when their brows are as wrinkled and their hair as gray as ours, who were the juveniles of half a century ago. Might not the business be brought to a close by eight o'clock, and might not some brother, whose character would give him weight, deliver an address to the young, solemn, earnest ; something to bring home to them vividly the Redeemer's claim on their hearts and on their lives ; something to

be remembered, as I have said, when Time has ploughed his wrinkles on the smooth brow, and Age has shed his snow on their heads? But we must pass on.

And now it is Tuesday morning. A few of us have met in the minister's vestry at Worship Street for half an hour of prayer, that we may ask God's blessing on the work of the day. We are but a few; for this great London of ours is a big place, and our dwellings, and the places where our country friends sojourn, are widely scattered; and years and infirmities are beginning to tell on some of us, so that though "the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak." But there are a few, enough for that small vestry, and we have a pleasant, and I trust a profitable, half-hour of prayer and praise. Meanwhile some of our young friends are busy, with Martha's carefulness, but without Martha's irritation, preparing for us our first social meal for the day, and a very pleasant meal it is; abundant though cheap, and set out pleasantly with flowers, and altogether in harmony with the freshness of the morning air, the keenness of the morning appetite, and the joy of meeting old and beloved friends. Nearly half a century has gone by since I first took my place at the breakfast-table on the Assembly morning. The meal was neither so cheap nor so pleasantly set out then. I think, too, that the company was more sedate; for we are a cheerful company now, and do not mind letting our cheerfulness appear; as if we had simultaneously grown older in years and younger in spirit. At any rate, we become young again as we recal to each other the memory of bygone days and dear old friends, friends lost so long ago, that the pain of parting no longer mars the sweetness of remembrance. We are numerous and compact enough to form one good company, and too few to form separate sets with separate themes of conversation and interest.—Breakfast over, we stroll into the burial-ground for a few minutes in the open air, albeit not of the clearest sort in this dense, and we might almost say squalid, part of London; and we excite the wonderment of many of the dwellers

around, who are no doubt sorely puzzled to make out what this yearly hubbub in our quiet place can mean.

But it is time for us to proceed to business : so we put our friend the Rev. E. R. Grant, of Portsmouth, in the Chair, and appoint the Rev. J. F. Kennard and Mr. Albert Badcock (who has come as representative of his brother's church at Saffron Walden) Moderators. It will initiate them in our way of doing business ; for Mr. Kennard has been with us only the last few years, and Mr. Badcock comes for the first time. Our brother John Marten asks the blessing of God upon our work ; for without His guidance and help, what do our labours avail ?

The last year's minutes are read, and then come the letters from the churches. They are not many ; for our churches are few, and they do not all write to us. But it is pleasant to hear of the welfare and to learn the thoughts of our brethren. At Billingshurst a good work is going on ; and the Dover letter has some thoughtful remarks on our want of care and earnestness in training up the young to join our churches, and to fill their fathers' places when these pass away. Of our London churches two write to us pretty fully. At Peckham a Bible class has been opened, and a tract distribution is carried on ; and at Worship Street they have established a monthly prayer-meeting. From Deptford we have neither representative nor letters, and Mill Yard has withdrawn from connexion with the Assembly, and consequently disappears from our Proceedings. From Portsmouth we have a cheering account ; their School, Benevolent Fund, and Ladies' Working Society, are in vigorous action ; and they have paid £50 off the debt incurred in enlarging the chapel. At Saffron Walden our friends have had difficulties, and complain of persecution,—rather a strong word for the opposition against which we all have to struggle. Then there is the Trowbridge letter, which is earnest and cheering, as it always is ; and a few lines from our venerable brother Lloyd tell us that at Nottage and Wick our brethren

stand their ground, but that the Sunday-school at Notage has seriously declined.

Ten baptisms are reported, eight at Trowbridge and two at Worship Street; and there are candidates or inquirers at both places.

There is yet time before service for reading the Letter to the Churches, which our venerable brother Howse, of Bath, has drawn up, or at least selections from it. It is easy reading; for advancing years have not shaken our brother's nerve, and the well-known writing is as beautiful and clear as it was half a century ago.

It is now the hour for the public service of God, and a congregation of about the usual number on the occasion is gathering. The desks on each side of the pulpit are occupied. From one of them, our brother Lindsey T. Badcock gives out the hymns; in the other, the genial and kindly Robert Spears, the Unitarian minister of Stamford Street, reads the appointed portions of Holy Writ (viz. Psalm cxxii. and John iv.); and in the pulpit the Rev. John Lawton, minister of the General Baptist Church (New Connexion) at Berkhamstead offers, with impressive fervour, the general prayer. The sermon is by our young brother, John B. Lloyd, who, himself a General Baptist, is minister of the Unitarian congregation at Wareham. So that the service is a virtual Christian Union, an anticipation of the time when the varying shades of human opinion shall disappear in the clear light of the Infinite Presence, and the varying voices of earth blend harmoniously in the eternally swelling chorus of heaven.

Our preacher's text is from the Gospel of St. John (iv. 48), "Then said Jesus unto him, 'Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.'" His object is to shew that the clearest evidence of the divine origin of the gospel is, not the miracles of which its earliest records speak, which however the preacher is far from repudiating, but its results—the hearts which, in all ages, in all stages of civilization, and in all grades of society, it has purified and elevated and drawn near

to God. The argument is clearly stated, and the sermon is listened to with interest and approval. It is followed by good old Dr. Watts's well-known hymn :

“So let our lips and lives express
The holy gospel we profess;
So let our works and virtues shine,
To prove the doctrine all divine.”

A short prayer offered by the preacher closes the service.

I have not said who are present. Billingshurst sends its minister, our brother Kennard, whom we have made one of our Moderators ; from Dover we have the minister, Thomas B. W. Briggs, and from Headcorn his brother John. But why does not at least one brother from Dover come with their minister? Why trust wholly to others? We welcome brother Rix, of Stratford, whom they have nominated, but we should have been glad for him to have a Dover colleague. Then we have John Marten, the minister of Peckham, from which church we have two representatives, Alfred Marchant and his son Alfred Joseph (our Chairman last night). Worship Street sends its minister (who is the Secretary of the Assembly) and six representatives—don't be alarmed, they can only claim one vote among them—viz. its two deacons, Withall and Dyer ; three younger brethren, H. Green, T. N. Dyer (Treasurer of the Juvenile Fund), and John J. Marten ; and Dr. Sadler, who, though minister of Hampstead Unitarian congregation, is a General Baptist, and still stands as a member of Worship Street. Portsmouth has nominated us its earnest and successful young minister (whom we have made our Chairman), and another brother, John Bainton, to whom they have added our young student, Daniel Batchellor, who is one of their church members. Saffron Walden sends its minister, Lindsey T. Badcock, and his brother Albert, one of our Moderators ; Trowbridge, our dear brother Samuel Martin ; and Nottage, its venerable minister, Titus Lloyd, and his son, the preacher of the

day. These are all the members of the Assembly present.

Beside them, we have two ministers of the New Connexion, the Revds. John Lawton, of Berkhamstead, and John G. Pike, of the Commercial Road Chapel, London, grandson and namesake of the author of a well-known book, "*Persuasives to Early Piety*." They both stay with us till the close of the Assembly business. There are also several Unitarian ministers with us, as the Revds. F. Bishop, of Chesterfield; James Cooper, of London; L. Hungen, of Carrickfergus; E. Kell, of Southampton; A. Lunn, of Chatham; G. Ride, of Chorley; R. Shelley, of Yarmouth; Joseph Smith, of Ipswich; Robert Spears, of London (already mentioned); W. Sutherland, of Malton; John Taylor, of London; and F. R. Young, of Swindon.

Our dinner is provided in the chapel, an arrangement which we would gladly alter, but we have no other place. It is better attended than usual, and is marked by the same kindly and social feeling as our earlier repast. The description given by our American brother Moore two years ago, which amused some of us at the time, is really not inappropriate, if understood with due qualification. He wrote home to his friends—"We had a pleasant, *jovial* time."

At half-past two business is resumed, the more important matters having been reserved till now, when the Assembly is better attended than at the morning sitting. The accounts of our several Funds are read, and the Reports of the Committee and Messengers. The chief points in the Committee's Report are, the establishment and publication of "*The General Baptist Messenger*;" the admission of Mr. Daniel Batchellor, of Portsmouth, as a student on the Education Fund, and the arrangements made for his general and his theological instruction; the grants, amounting to £85, made to various churches; the additions to the General Baptist Library; and the friendly relations, begun at the last Assembly, with our brethren of the New Connexion. All the

Messengers urge in their reports the cultivation of this renewed intercourse; and express their hope of the benefit we shall derive from it, in the increase among us of deep and earnest religious feeling.

The various resolutions are then discussed and passed. The first welcomes the members of the New Connexion who are present, and revives, in their behalf, what was, at the beginning of this century, a standing rule of the Assembly, that the members of General Baptist churches not in union with the Assembly should be admitted to take part in the business, though not to vote. Mr. Lawton and Mr. Pike are consequently requested to move resolutions, which they do. The Assembly records its approval of the steps taken by the Committee, and adopts its various recommendations, except that it adds to the resolution of satisfaction at the proposed disestablishment of the Irish Church, a Petition to the House of Lords. The Committee had not thought this necessary; but its members at once fell in with the expressed wish of the Assembly. A resolution is passed of satisfaction at the welcome our deputation received last year at Derby, and fresh deputations are appointed to our own Kent Association, and to the London District Conference, and the Annual Association of the New Connexion; and one to visit our churches as opportunities offer, with a view to revive an interest in our principles. Thanks are voted to our Preacher, on the motion of Mr. Pike, who expresses the pleasure with which he heard his sermon; and our brethren John A. Briggs and F. Dyer are appointed respectively to preach and to write the Letter to the Churches at the next Assembly. The officers and the Committee are re-appointed, and the other usual resolutions passed.

The business has been of more than common interest, and the spirit of it has been at once earnest and harmonious. Though not numerously attended, it has been one of the best Assemblies that any of us can remember.

The proceedings are closed with an appropriate prayer by Mr. Pike.

Another social meal, tea, which is partaken of by a more numerous company than usual, follows ; and then there is a general adjournment to the burial-ground, the open space of which and the shade of its trees afford a pleasant change from the confinement of the chapel, hardly to be looked for in this closely-built and densely-peopled quarter. Our friends are slow in gathering again in the chapel for the evening meeting, the last of the proceedings of this long and happy day.

Our brother Samuel Martin is in the chair. We are all glad to have him once more among us, and to hear a voice and see a countenance associated with what has been best and holiest among us for the last forty years. We begin with the same hymn as last evening,

“Kindred in Christ, for his dear sake ;”*

and then, after the Chairman’s opening speech, we have addresses from the brethren who have been requested to speak to the sentiments prepared. I much regret that I have no notes of these addresses, especially Mr. Young’s, which perhaps I may be allowed to characterize as the speech of the evening. I can only give the sentiments, the names of the speakers, and the hymns which followed.

“The Christian Church, a tree of many branches, but one root.”—Rev. J. B. Lloyd.

“Abide with me ! fast falls the eventide,” &c.

“Our Baptist Fathers ; may we imitate their faithfulness and zeal.”—Rev. T. B. W. Briggs.

“Give me the wings of faith, to rise
Within the veil, and see

The saints above, how great their joys,
How bright their glories be,” &c.

* All the hymns sung at this evening meeting are from the card of eight “Supplementary Hymns” recently printed by the Juvenile Fund, and which our friends can obtain, 25 copies for 1s. 6d., and postage, by writing to the Treasurer, Mr. T. N. Dyer, 154, St. James’s Road, Bermondsey, London, S.E.

"The Saviour, ever present with his people, their guide, their stay, and their trust."—Rev. F. R. Young.

"Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear,
It is not night if thou be near ;
O may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide thee from thy servant's eyes," &c.

"The Young, the hope of this generation, the strength of the next."—Rev. L. T. Badcock.

"Hail, sweetest, dearest tie, that binds
In one our glowing hearts !
Hail, sacred hope, that to our minds
Serenest joy imparts !
It is the hope, the blissful hope,
Which Jesus' grace has given,
The hope, when days and years are past,
We all shall meet in heaven," &c.

A word or two about this hymn, which is probably new to nearly all our readers. Brother Marten and I heard it at the Association at Derby last year. It was written by Dr. Amos Sutton, one of the Missionaries of our New Connexion brethren, who died in India ; and it is their usual closing hymn at their religious meetings. It is sung to an air, "Auld lang syne," which, although secular, is not incongruous ; for surely the kindly remembrance of old friends is in harmony with the hope of an eternal re-union. Some of our musical friends apprehended a break-down—I cannot conceive why ; but then I am not musical. However, there was no break-down : the hymn was sung by the meeting with heart and voice ; and with brother John Marten's prayer, it formed a suitable close to the work of the day.

And so ended the Assembly of 1869, receding into the past, to take its place among our most cherished memories.

J. C. MEANS.

We are permitted to supplement the above report by the following extract from a letter of the Rev. John Lawton :

"I will endeavour in a few words to comply with your request respecting my impression of your Assembly.

“I was pleased to find in the Worship Street chapel, what I had not expected to find in such a part of London, a place of worship clean, airy and comfortable. The open benches, with ample space between, seemed quite in keeping with the respectable congregation which met for the morning service.

“Had there been a larger body of representatives, there would no doubt have been a greater inducement to speechify. The remarks made by those who had resolutions to propose were, however, pertinent and sufficient.

“I found decidedly more vigour in the Assembly than I had anticipated, and my own reception warmer than I expected. I was thankful to learn that amid all the tendencies to decline, one of your churches had baptized eight during the year, and another several. I thought I could trace a connection between such success and the manner in which I have reason to believe the truths of the gospel are set forth in those churches.

“I was pleased also with the freshness of thought and felicity of expression presented in the sermon; and especially so with the suggestion that we should not dwell too exclusively on Christ in past history, though a history instinct with the marvellous, but that we should also recognize a living Christ, present with us in the diversified scenes of this changing life. I hope we shall endeavour to profit by the thought.

“Sympathy with the advancement of religious equality I expected to find among the General Baptists of the Old Connexion, and I was not disappointed. Let the same enthusiasm flow through the channels of ordinary Christian life in behalf of that ‘name which is above every name,’ and we shall not have to lament that so few are arrested and brought to the Saviour’s feet.”

THE DEPUTATION TO BERKHAMPSTEAD.

THE following account is taken from the *General Baptist Magazine*. I have elsewhere* explained that the Conferences of the New Connexion correspond to our Associations, and their Association to our Assembly; and that the "London District" includes all their churches in the South of England. Berkhamstead is about 30 miles from London, on the London and North-Western railway, and the General Baptist church there is one of a group of five neighbouring churches, in the counties of Herts and Bucks, with over 700 members, of whom one-fourth belong to Berkhamstead. The chapel is of recent erection, and will hold, I should judge, 600 or 700 people, with two large school-rooms for 200 or 250 scholars each. The ground was bought and the whole built (using such of the materials of the old chapel as were available) at the cost of about £2400.

The friends from London of both Connexions made up a party of more than ten, and as we were not going on business, we obtained return tickets for a single fare. This may furnish a useful hint to friends elsewhere. Dinner and tea were provided, and for us Londoners a supper, free of cost to all ministers, and to others at a reasonable charge. The kindness of our reception appears in the account itself, and needs no confirmation from me.

J. C. M.

THE LONDON CONFERENCE.—This Conference met at Berkhamstead on May 25.

A devotional service was held in the morning, conducted by the minister of the place. Brethren Preston, Hood, Marten, Means, Attersley, Marchant, Clifford, and Col. Sanderson, engaged in prayer. It was a hallowed and profitable season.

The business meeting was held in the afternoon at

* In my report as Messenger, which will appear in the Assembly Proceedings.

half-past two. The minister of the place being Secretary of the Conference, the Rev. Isaac Preston was asked to take the chair. After singing and prayer, the reports of the churches were given. Fifty-three had been baptized since the previous Conference, and twenty-four remained as candidates.

The minutes of the previous Conference were read and confirmed.

A deputation from the General Baptist Assembly held in London on the 18th of May was introduced, consisting of the Rev. John Marten and Mr. A. J. Marchant, of Peckham, and the Rev. J. C. Means, of Worship Street, London. These brethren, each in a short address, expressed kind Christian sentiments, and a desire for a closer union between the New Connexion of General Baptists and their own body, suggesting that while some differences exist, they are fewer than they once were; that a broad basis of union remains, and that this should be recognized, if by nothing more, at least by an interchange of expressions of Christian friendship and sympathy.

It was resolved,—“That a deputation consisting of brethren Harcourt and Lawton be appointed to represent this Conference at the next meeting of the General Assembly, for the purpose of reciprocating the kindly Christian sentiments expressed to-day by the deputation that Assembly has sent to the Conference.”

It was agreed that the next Conference be held at Borough Road, London, on the first Wednesday in October. That the Rev. R. Y. Roberts, of Portsea, be the preacher, and that Dr. Burns be requested to write a paper for the Conference, or, in case of failure, the Rev. Dawson Burns.

Brother Sage, of Wendover, then read a paper on “The Relation of the Church to the Congregation.”

It was resolved,—“That the very cordial thanks of this Conference be given to Brother Sage for the excellent practical paper which he has read, and that he be requested to send it for insertion in the Magazine.”

There was no time left for the discussion of the subject of the paper.

The Rev. J. G. Pike, of Commercial Road, preached in the evening from James iv. 17, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

JOHN LAWTON, *Secretary*.

THE DEPUTATION TO SHEFFIELD.

[In the first number I gave an account of "the Deputation to Derby." I thought it better, therefore, that the report of the Deputation to Sheffield should be drawn up by my colleague, Mr. Grant,* that our brethren might see the Annual Association through other eyes than mine, and have the record of its impression on another mind. That my colleague's impression was in several respects different from mine, will be easily understood: but it is only on one or two points that I shall add any supplementary remarks.

I may add, that some copies of the Chairman's excellent address, and of Mr. Goadby's Letter to the Churches, have been ordered, and will be distributed to our churches.

J. C. M.]

As one of the deputation appointed at the Assembly to attend the Annual Conference of the New Connexion of General Baptists, I have been requested to give a short account of its proceedings, and the impression they made on my mind.

I left Portsmouth early on Monday, the 21st of June, and, nearly stifled with dust and choked with smoke, arrived by the last train, for the first time, in the town of Sheffield, "where the Briareus and Cyclops of modern mythology live and labour, where live the lineal descendants of Thor, christianised to human industries, where the great hammer of the Scandinavian thunderer

* Only two of the deputation appointed were able to go to Sheffield; Messrs. S. Martin and T. B. W. Briggs being prevented by circumstances.

descended and took nest and hatched a brood of ten thousand little iron beetles for beating iron and steel into shapes that Tubal Cain never dreamed of." Sheffield, though full of life and energy, is not one of the pleasantest places to visit, much less to live in. I was there about five days, and from first to last the town was under a canopy of smoke, scarcely a single gleam of sunshine breaking through. As a dweller in the clear and balmy South, I was glad to visit it, but I was also quite as glad to leave it.

I was too late to attend the opening meeting of the Conference, which is chiefly of a devotional character. On Tuesday morning at seven I went to hear an address delivered by the Rev. J. Sage on "Ministerial Success: how it is hindered by Christians." Whilst fully appreciating the clearness with which, from his stand-point, he treated his subject, and whilst admiring his earnestness and deep spiritual fervour, I was disappointed. I could not help feeling that his stand-point was a false one, and that his difficulty was to some extent self-created. He lamented that there no longer existed the difference between the Church and the World which formerly obtained, and blamed Christians for destroying the old line of demarcation, by which they hindered ministerial success. I wondered if the question had ever suggested itself to his mind, whether instead of trying to perpetuate the ancient hostility between Church and World, it would not be much *better* for mankind that many of the old outward signs should no longer exist. That they do *not* exist, shews, I think, that Christianity has to some extent leavened the rest of the civilized world. And if the world is to be saved, it will be done not so much by condemning the natural and innocent pleasures of life, as by Christians themselves giving up their religious self-complacency and their pride of superiority, and by learning to be at least as large-hearted and generous and charitable as the unprofessing world. Mr. Sage's difficulty has been created *by* the Church; and when the Church learns to insist *less* on certain

Puritanical distinctions, *then*, and not till then, the world will begin to care *more* for the principles of a high Christian morality.

At ten o'clock, the Rev. J. Salisbury, M.A., delivered, as Chairman of the Association, the Annual Address. He delivered it with that heartiness, yet artlessness, which always attracts and holds the attention, and his gentle manner, tender spirit and winning smile, combined to make it deeply impressive. His subject was "Christian Work." He treated it with the hand of a master. And after he had gone through his argument, which was a long one, step by step, and reached the end, a smile like a gleam of sunlight glowed on his face, and his vast auditory had been so moved by his appeal, that all seemed ready for the contest to which he had called them. He warned them against holding their weapons daintily, and against fighting daintily, as though they feared to lose their reputation by wounding the enemy; and the tremendous cheering which followed the address gave witness that all had caught the spirit of his words, and were ready to put on their armour and quit themselves like men.

This was my first acquaintance with the "New Connexion" as a body; and at the close of this address I felt that there was a breadth of view, and a spirit of earnestness, and a common desire for common Christian work among them, which would warrant us in seeking an interchange of those kindly and fraternal feelings which should always exist in communities where there is so much in common.

But in this I was soon to be undeceived. After the despatch of some minor business and the reading of the Secretary's report, which was a model of terseness, pointfulness and brevity, the Chairman announced the presence of two members of the deputation, the Rev. J. C. Means and myself, appointed by the Assembly to attend their Conference. The Rev. J. Clifford, M.A., LL.B., read the resolutions of the Assembly; after which Dr. Underwood rose to move a resolution to the effect—

"That we welcome the deputation, and cordially reciprocate the good wishes of the General Baptists of the Old Connexion, and appoint as a deputation to their next Assembly the Ministers of the London Conference." He did this in a rather cautious way, informing the Association, rather unnecessarily as many of his friends thought, that whilst he welcomed the deputation, he was very orthodox and had no leaning to their heresies. After the resolution was seconded, a long discussion took place as to the advisability of passing such a resolution. The Rev. J. C. Jones, of Spalding, took the lead in a very decided tone, speaking, as he informed us, for many who had not the courage to express their feelings on the matter. He was supported by Dr. Burns, who last year seconded a similar motion of welcome. After a considerable amount of noise and not a few hard words, the resolution was carried by a large majority, and we were welcomed by that majority with an earnestness which possibly would not have been manifested had it not been for this hostility on the part of a few. The course for us to pursue after such an expression of feeling is very clear to my mind; but I leave it to be sketched by abler hands and by a wiser head.

Passing by meetings which call for no special mention here, we come to the annual Sermon. It was delivered by the Rev. J. Alcorn, of Burnley. The text was from 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16, "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death, and unto the other the savour of life unto life: and who is sufficient for these things?" The discourse was a very long one. It would have taken some ministers nearly four hours to deliver it, but Mr. Alcorn, at his high-pressure speed, managed to get through it in about two. Such a rush of words I never heard before, and in a sermon hope never to hear again. He has a good voice, with a bold, energetic and enthusiastic manner. He said many good things and made several telling points; so much so, that once the people

actually clapped their hands. As to its theology, it was the gospel according to Paul, and not according to Jesus. It was a most eloquent display of the hardest and sternest Arminian orthodoxy. All the old doctrines were brought out with a vividness that was almost startling. And by going right into his text, and round about it and above it and beneath it, he produced a series of the most remarkable sermons it was ever my lot to listen to. I am glad for the sake of the New Connexion that the discourse was not altogether acceptable ; for whilst some of the older ministers thanked God that they had a man among them capable of preaching such a sermon, others regretted that it had been delivered, and one told me plainly that he did not believe "in such stuff."

If that sermon struck to any very large extent the key-note of the theology of their body, I submit that there can be no true union between us for any good purpose—at least so long as that theology continues unaltered. There are many of the younger and more intellectual men who may come to rule in another generation ; it was very brave of them to welcome us so nobly as they did ; but until a change takes place, I think we ought not by our deputations evoke the spirit of discord among them, even though the changes we desire might be brought about more speedily by them.

Next in order came that part of the proceedings which I felt to be the most deeply interesting and profitable. It was the celebration of the Lord's Supper. There were upwards of four hundred communicants. The service was so conducted as to be very touching and impressive. It was opened by singing a very beautiful hymn, written by Sir John Bowring. The short portions of Scripture were read in a spirit befitting the occasion, and the prayer offered by the Rev. I. Preston was the sacred breathing of a soul impressed with the solemnity of the hour. It was indeed a season of refreshing—an hour once enjoyed never to be forgotten. It seemed for the time to annihilate all religious distinctions—to typify the infinite catholicity of faith and the essential unity of the Universal Church.

I may here just mention how I was struck with the absence from the prayers of nearly all the old orthodox phrases. I heard nearly twenty ministers pray, of which only one addressed his petitions to Christ, none to the Trinity, and nearly all to the Heavenly Father. I was pained that some felt God to be at so great a distance from them ; but, apart from this, the devotional services of the Conference shewed that there was a more vital union than that of opinion. In their speeches and sermons I was often divided from them, but in their prayers we were at one. There were no inflammatory appeals, no fierce assaults, no noisy exultations, none of those old expedients which are so utterly foreign to the solemnity of worship ; but, whilst there was an absence of these, there was also the presence of a refined emotion, a deep spiritual fervour, and a divine influence too seldom found, I fear, in our own churches.

Of the annual meetings of the Home and Foreign Missions there is little to be said, more than that they were numerously attended, well sustained and successful. The speeches were of the average order, with two exceptions. One was by R. Leader, Esq., B.A., the Chairman of the Home Mission meeting. His speech was very comprehensive and valuable as a review of the state of religion in Europe, the influence of Nonconformity on the Established Church, and as pointing out the changes that may be expected to take place in the religious world during the next twenty years. The other was a singularly able speech on foreign missions by the Rev. J. Clifford, of London.

The Rev. W. Orton's sermon on Thursday morning was an orthodox speculation about angels, from Ephes. iii. 10.

The Letter to the Churches had been prepared and was read by the Rev. J. Jackson Goadby. Its subject was the "Lessons for General Baptists of the present Day taught by the Deeds of our Fathers." The Letter was a careful composition, and the Lessons were well brought out ; but in tracing the history of the body, he said that our decline had been brought about by our

connection with what he not very gracefully called the "dry-rot of Unitarianism." I know some of our friends are inclined to think the same. I have but little sympathy with some things that pass under its name, but by attending these meetings I am confirmed in my opinion that, whatever may be the cause of our decline, it is *not* simply our connection with Unitarians.

The Association was brought to a close on Thursday evening by a free conference and prayer.

EDWARD R. GRANT.

[The resolution of welcome this year was a decided advance upon that of last year: then we were simply welcomed; now we are again welcomed, and a return deputation is appointed. This year's resolution is as follows:

"That we cordially welcome the deputation from the Old Connexion of General Baptists and heartily reciprocate the good wishes now conveyed by them, and hereby appoint the Ministers of our London Churches as our delegation to the next annual meeting of the Assembly."

It was moved by Dr. Underwood, President of Chilwell College, and seconded by the Rev. Isaac Preston, of Chesham. Dr. Underwood's "caution," which Mr. Grant seems to think unnecessary, was natural enough in his position as head of their College, whose own theological position should be clearly understood, in order to his retaining the confidence of his brethren; and the hand of welcome which is prompted by a comprehensiveness of spirit that reaches across a gulf of recognized difference, is nobler than that which arises from theological agreement.

I am not aware that any one but Mr. Jones directly spoke against the resolution. Dr. Burns thought it a matter that required serious consideration, and wished the decision to be deferred to the Thursday. All the other speakers, as far as I recollect, supported the resolution; which was carried, as I am assured by a friend of high standing in the New Connexion, who was so

placed as to command a view of the whole meeting, by “a large majority, considerably more than two to one.”

Mr. Jones’s position, character and attainments, give weight to his opposition ; but our brethren, in the report in *The General Baptist Magazine*, have not thought it important enough to require notice in their report of the Association.

The Preacher says, “Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour ;” and Mr. Grant, in his criticism of Mr. Goadby’s letter, has picked out the one dead fly in a tolerably large and, as it seemed to me, fragrant pot of ointment. The words, if my memory is correct, were these—“The decline of the old Baptist churches is sufficiently accounted for by the dry-rot of Socinianism.” Mr. Goadby was speaking of the last century, and he was plainly referring to the sentiments prevailing in the churches themselves—not, as Mr. Grant supposes, to their association with another body. That the divergence of our churches from orthodoxy was contemporaneous with their decline, is an indisputable fact : that one was the cause of the other, is an inference too obvious and natural to be a reasonable ground of surprise or offence. The real objection to the passage was to its epigrammatic tartness of expression ; but this the maturer judgment and better feeling of the writer has led him to alter in revising his manuscript for the press. Our readers will soon be able to judge of his letter for themselves, as they may learn from our introduction.

J. C. M.]

THE LATE REVDS. J. J. TAYLER AND R. B. ASPLAND.

SINCE Whitsuntide the Unitarian body has been deprived by death of two of its most justly esteemed ministers, whose names are at the head of this article. Mr. Tayler died, after a few weeks’ illness, on the 28th of May ; and Mr. Aspland suddenly on the 21st June. His health had been recently failing, and his congregation had just given him three months’ leave of absence in

order to its recovery; but no immediate danger was apprehended, and he had received visits and written letters on the very day of his decease.

Our space will scarcely allow us to do more than record the decease of these two excellent men. An appropriate tribute to Mr. Tayler's memory has appeared in the *Theological Review* from the pen of the Rev. Charles Beard; and interesting obituary notices of each have been given in the columns of the *Inquirer* and *Unitarian Herald*. We can here only give expression to our sense of their admirable qualities, and of our own loss in the decease of two valued friends of many years' standing; with one of whom indeed (Mr. Aspland) our friendship was hereditary, and began in early childhood at a time beyond the memory of either.

The two men, while both possessed of high Christian excellence, were marked by different qualities which made them the complement of each other: a tender and devout meditateness of spirit, was the specialty of Mr. Tayler; Mr. Aspland's was a sound and ready judgment and practical energy, qualified by uniform kindness of spirit and courtesy of manner. Their divergent views sometimes placed them in opposition to each other, but it was an opposition always tempered by their mutual regard. It will be difficult to fill up the void which their removal has made: impossible indeed to fill it at once; for their successors will have to grow to be what long years of devoted labour had made them.

"Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

J. C. M.

Published by E. T. WHITFIELD, 178, Strand.

Packets of four or more copies sent post free, or 25 copies for 1s. 6d., by application to Mr. T. N. DYER, 154, St. James's Road, Bermondsey, London, S.E.; to whom also all payments are to be made. Quarterly payments are desired.

The publication of the present No. has been unavoidably delayed.

THE GENERAL BAPTIST MESSENGER.

No. 5. Vol. I.

OCTOBER, 1869.

Price 1d.

HOW OUR GENERAL BAPTIST CHURCHES WERE PLANTED AND HOW THEY GREW.

CHAP. III.—FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCHES IN THE WEALD OF KENT—WILLIAM JEFFERY, FRANCIS CORNWELL AND GEO. HAMMON—THE CHURCHES ON THE KENTISH COAST—RICHARD HOBBS AND CAPTAIN SAMUEL TAVERNER—CHURCHES AT CHATHAM AND MAIDSTONE—CAPTAIN ROBERT MORECOCK AND JOSEPH WRIGHT—CHURCHES IN SUSSEX—HORSHAM—MATTHEW CAFFYN—CHICHESTER—JAMES SICKLEMORE—CHURCHES IN THE WEST OF ENGLAND—THEIR CONFESSIONS OF FAITH—CHURCHES IN THE MIDLAND COUNTIES AND IN LINCOLNSHIRE—THOMAS GRANTHAM.

It is time now to speak of those worthy labourers in Christ's vineyard to whom our country churches owe their origin. I will begin with those who laboured in Kent, a county which has been all along one of the strongholds of our body.

William Jeffery was born in 1616, of pious parents, at Penshurst, in the south-western corner of Kent, and, after he reached manhood, settled at Bradbourne, a hamlet near Sevenoaks, a small but rapidly growing town in one of the most beautiful parts of the county, twenty-four miles from London. Here he gathered a church, which still exists, though in a very reduced condition. It meets in a small, primitive-looking chapel at Bessel's Green, near Sevenoaks. While I write of it, I recall to mind the good men with whom I worshipped there in occasional visits in early boyhood, nearly sixty years ago, and who now rest in the quiet grave-yard which adjoins the chapel, a lovely spot, whose beauty in the summer-tide might well symbolize the Paradise of our Heavenly

Father, where "the Lamb leads them to living fountains of waters, and God wipes away all tears from their eyes."

But I am wandering from Mr. Jeffery. Besides this church, he gathered another at Speldhurst and Pembury, which afterwards was located at Tunbridge Wells. It appears to have been a flourishing church, but has been long extinct; and all that remains of it is the forsaken grave-yard and some small endowments, which are still held in trust in hope of better times. William Jeffery, with the assistance of his brother David, is said to have founded as many as twenty churches in Kent, all of which were remaining in 1738. We have no means now of ascertaining which churches are here meant, or of otherwise testing the statement. It is probable that the church at Marden, of which our existing church of Cranbrook was a branch and is the representative, was one of the twenty. Cranbrook is a small town in the southern part of Kent, forty-six miles from London; and Marden a village six or seven miles nearer London.

The clergyman of Marden, Francis Cornwell, who had taken his degree of M.A. at the University of Cambridge, was one of Mr. Jeffery's converts. He had become dissatisfied with some parts of the ritual of the Church, and incurred the penalty of imprisonment at Maidstone by his non-observance of them. While in prison, a woman who had doubts about infant baptism applied to him to solve them; but in attempting to satisfy her, he became himself convinced that infant baptism was unscriptural, and after his release and return to Marden was privately baptized by Mr. Jeffery. This was in or before 1644, when, being appointed to preach a visitation sermon, he took for his text the words, "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men;" and denounced infant baptism as a human invention. The clergy who were present were much startled, and offered to dispute with him on the subject; but he referred them to Mr. Jeffery, who was present. A Mr. Blackwood, a clergyman, proposed to adjourn the discussion till their

next meeting, when he engaged to reply to Mr. Cornwell's sermon, which he had taken down in short-hand; but before the time came, he too had become a Baptist. Both Mr. Cornwell and Mr. Blackwood joined the Particular Baptists; but another Francis Cornwell, who is supposed to have been a son of this one, was present at our General Baptist Assembly in 1692 as representative of the General Baptist church at Marden.

Another eminent labourer in this county was George Hammon. He seems to have been a self-taught man, of a shrewd and ready mind and of a fearless character. His sphere of labour was to the east of William Jeffery's, where there were Baptists at Biddenden, Frittenden, Tenterden, Rolvenden, Spilshill near Staplehurst, and Smarden; but how many distinct churches they formed, I cannot now ascertain. Mr. Hammon appears to have been pastor of the church at Biddenden, which was formed some years before 1648 and had many branches; but whether it was gathered by Mr. Hammon does not appear.

Two General Baptist churches still remain in this district: one at Headcorn, in union with the Assembly, and one at Smarden, belonging to the New Connexion; but which of these ancient churches they represent, I have no means of knowing. The church at Headcorn is under the pastoral care of the Rev. John A. Briggs, for some years one of the Secretaries to the Assembly.

Another important church was formed in the towns on the coast—Sandwich, Deal, Dover, Folkestone and Hythe, in all which it had branches. Dover may be regarded as the chief, and the church there still exists, under the pastoral care of the Rev. T. B. W. Briggs, brother of the minister at Headcorn. This church was subsequently divided into three, Sandwich and Deal (at which latter place we have still a small neat chapel, though closed for the present) forming one, and Folkestone and Hythe another; Dover by itself being the third. Folkestone and Hythe have been

long extinct. Deal has had an intermittent existence and is only recently closed ; but its Sandwich branch has been long dead.

This group of churches was gathered, it is likely, by Richard Hobbs, who was pastor before the Restoration, about which time Edward Prescot was joined with him in the charge. But the most important person connected with this church was Captain Samuel Taverner, a native of Essex, and an officer in the Parliamentary army, who was appointed by Cromwell, in 1653, governor of Deal Castle, which is on the coast, about nine or ten miles from Dover. Here he became acquainted with Mr. Prescot. I think I have somewhere seen a statement that he first heard him preach in the open air, and that he sought to hide himself while he listened. Possibly he had been brought up among the Presbyterians, by many, indeed by most of whom, the "Ana-baptists," as our people were commonly and reproachfully termed, were at once hated and despised. However this may be, Captain Taverner listened and was convinced. In 1663, he was baptized by Mr. Prescot at Sandwich, and became a member of his church. In 1665, he resigned his governorship of Deal Castle, and, removing to Dover, went into business as a grocer. He was called to preach soon after he joined the Baptists, and in 1681 was chosen to the pastorate ; Mr. Hobbs having died some years before, and probably Mr. Prescot also being dead, though of the time of his death I have no account. It was shortly after Captain Taverner became pastor, that the division of the church into three distinct churches, as mentioned above, took place. Mr. Richard Cannon became at or near that time joint pastor with Captain Taverner. The separation was amicable, and necessary from the extent of ground covered by the church, Sandwich and Hythe, the extremities, being twenty miles apart.

This good man lived and laboured till 1696, when he died, and was buried in a small enclosure of his own, where I have seen his tomb. It is still called "Taver-

nier's (pronounced Tarvener's) Garden," and was long used as a burial-place, but is too small and too closely surrounded by buildings to be so used now. The Captain's family has only recently ceased to be connected with us. The last of his descendants who remained with us was a Mrs. Fordham, whose munificent bequest furnishes the bulk of our Assembly Funds. I was in former years a frequent guest of her mother, Mrs. Peirce, a woman truly venerable for years, charity and piety; and in the bed-room which I used to occupy was a quaint, versified tribute, printed and framed, to the memory of the good Captain, written probably soon after his decease.

The church at Canterbury was founded before the civil war; and we have seen that in the time of the Commonwealth, in 1654, Henry Denne became its pastor. In 1663, it consisted of above a hundred members; and in 1681, it had two pastors and three deacons. Towards the end of the century, the bequests of some of the brethren enabled the church to purchase and fit up their present place of worship, which is said to have been the refectory (or dining-room) of the monastery of the Dominican or Black Friars, and is still known as the Blackfriars' Meeting. The church is still in existence and in connexion with our Assembly, but in a very reduced condition.

Between Dover and Canterbury was a General Baptist church at the village of Eythorn, which is said to have originated in 1590, in the reign of Elizabeth, and to have had for one hundred and eighty years a succession of pastors of the name of John Knott, all of one family. One of these John Knotts took part in the formation of the New Connexion in 1770; but I believe the church has since joined the Particular Baptists.

At Chatham, which was then, as now, one of the stations of the British navy, a General Baptist church was gathered, but I know not by whom. Robert Morecock, a naval Captain in the time of Cromwell and the

earlier years of Charles the Second, was a member and one of their preachers, officiating sometimes in the scarlet roquelaure or cloak which was part of his naval attire. Disgust with the tyrannical measures of the government led him to resign his commission as a naval officer, but he was employed in raising the ships sunk to prevent the approach of the Dutch, when they sailed up the Medway in 1667. When he became pastor of the church is not clear; but it is likely that it was when he quitted the navy, and that the two events were parts of one change. He was accused falsely of having been a sharer in Monmouth's rebellion in 1685, but was happily enabled to prove his innocence. He died in 1693, and was buried in the ground belonging to our meeting-house at Chatham. When I was minister there, I ascertained the spot, and found that there had been a stone erected to his memory, but that it had been shattered by an accident and never replaced.

The church at Chatham is still in existence, and, though its present estimable minister is not a Baptist, the church remains in connexion with our Assembly.

It only remains for me to mention one more Kentish church, that at Maidstone, now extinct. I know little more of its early history than that one Joseph Wright was the minister for nearly forty years. He was originally with the General Baptists at Westby, in Lincolnshire, by whom he was chosen "Messenger," and left that county for Kent about the time of the Restoration. He was a man of great resolution, and, as we may have to notice at a future time, a stern vindicator of what he deemed orthodoxy. He was a great sufferer for conscience' sake, having spent, we are told, twenty years in Maidstone jail; yet during this long confinement he interested himself in the welfare of his own and other churches. He appears to have been in his closing years in good circumstances; and there is even a tradition that he was once Mayor of Maidstone, but that is not likely. He died in 1708, at the age of eighty,

and his tomb at Tovil, a village near Maidstone, was said to be still standing in 1818, with an inscription in Latin and Greek, nearly effaced.

There were many General Baptist churches in Sussex at this time, of which that at Horsham was the most noted. It was gathered during the civil war by Mr. Samuel Lover; and some time after was joined by Matthew Caffyn (the name is variously spelt), a native of the place, born in or about 1628, who had been expelled from the University of Oxford for embracing and defending believers' baptism. He became elder of the Horsham church, first in conjunction with Mr. Lover, and after his death as sole elder. He was an earnest, conscientious man, with great aptitude for controversy, and, it is likely, a relish for it. He was a great sufferer in the persecutions in the reign of Charles the Second, having been imprisoned five times—once in Newgate, when many of his fellow-prisoners died, and he himself was near dying—and having had to pay heavy fines for his Nonconformity. He was appointed a Messenger of the churches; an office of which I shall presently speak, and was concerned in planting and assisting many neighbouring churches. During the Commonwealth, in 1655, he had a public dispute with the Quakers, a body then in the pugnacious stage of their existence. He had already obtained great reputation in controversy, as his chief Quaker opponent said, and was "cried up by the General Baptists in Sussex as their battle-axe and weapon of war."

An amusing story of this good man is upon record. A Quaker came to him at his residence, apparently at Southwater, near Horsham, where he held a farm tithe-free, and gravely accosted him—"Matthew Caffyn, I have a message from the Lord to thee." "Come in then," said Caffyn, "and deliver thy message." "I am come," proceeded the Quaker, "to reprove thee for paying tithes to the priests, and to forbid thy doing so any more." "I think," rejoined Caffyn with quiet slyness, "I can convince thee that thou art deceived, and that

the Lord has not sent thee; for I assure thee I never did pay any tithes, nor am ever likely to be charged with any."

He lived to a great age, much respected in the body. When he was almost seventy, he was accused of holding heretical opinions; but the narrative of this charge, with its serious results in the angry dissensions and long continued separation of our body into two parts, belongs to another portion of my narrative. Matthew Caffyn was assisted in the latter part of his ministry by his son of the same name, who, on his father's death in 1714, at the age of eighty-six, succeeded him, having, either then or afterwards, a Mr. Thomas Southon as his colleague.

This church at Horsham is still in union with our Assembly, as is the neighbouring church at Billingshurst, which was originally a branch of the Horsham church.

The General Baptists were at an early period numerous in and round Lewes, but I know nothing more than that they suffered in the persecutions of the reign of Charles the Second. There were General Baptists also at Brighton, or, as it was then written, Brighthelmstone; and another church at Ditchling, in the same neighbourhood; but when gathered, or by whom, I do not know. At Turner's Hill, near East Grinstead, there was also a church, probably small. The Lewes church became extinct about half a century ago; Brighton became Unitarian many years since; and Turner's Hill (if it be, as I suspect, the church afterwards at Horley and still later at Nutfield) became extinct some twenty years ago. Ditchling still remains nominally connected with us—I fear only nominally. In its quiet little meeting-house, beautifully situated at the foot of the northern slope of the chalk range of the South Downs, I preached my first sermon forty years ago. I once preached to the Turner's Hill church, on a week-night, in the kitchen of an out-of-the-way farm-house in Nutfield parish, to a tolerably numerous congregation for the time and place.

The General Baptist church at Chichester was founded by James Sicklemore, who was parish clergyman of Singleton, a village near that city, and fulfilled the duties of his office in a most exemplary manner. As he was catechizing the children, and striving to explain to them what their godfathers had done for them, a bystander asked him what scriptural authority there was for the whole service of infant baptism. He pleaded the general practice of the church ; but, not satisfied in his own mind, examined the subject again, and was, in the result, led to give up infant baptism, and become an advocate of believers' baptism. This was in 1648 ; but he retained his living probably till the Act of Uniformity in 1662 ; but as he did not approve of tithes for the support of the ministry, he gave away to the poor all his income from that source. He was instrumental in gathering the General Baptist churches of Chichester and Portsmouth, both of which, the former after a suspension of existence for many years, are still in union with us. There was also a General Baptist church at Southampton, whose minister, John Sims, was baptized by Mr. Sicklemore before the Restoration ; and one at Newport, in the Isle of Wight, which is still in existence, but ceased to be connected with us in the early part of this century. It is Unitarian. The church at Southampton must have become extinct long ago.

In Somersetshire and the adjacent parts of the south-west of England, there were a number of Baptist churches, which in 1656 published a Confession of Faith, given in the collection of Baptist Confessions published by the Hanserd Knollys Society. It is a very remarkable Confession, strongly affirming the unconditional election and final perseverance of some, but being quite silent as to the doctrine of reprobation. I suspect the churches which issued this Confession to have been, part of them General, and the other part Particular Baptists. It is remarkable that the Somersetshire General Baptists in a later Confession, published in the year 1691, describe themselves as "denying personal

reprobation," the very point of the Calvinistic system on which the Confession of 1656 is silent. This confirms my impression that some of the churches which subscribed that Confession were General Baptist. Among them were churches at Taunton and Wedmore in Somersetshire, and North Bradley in Wiltshire, close to Trowbridge. There were General Baptist churches at a somewhat later time at Taunton, Wedmore and Trowbridge; and I apprehend these were the subscribers to the Confession of 1656, and if so, they were founded before that time. These churches do not appear severally in the early records of our Assembly; they are always grouped under the name of the "Western Association." Trowbridge alone now remains with us. Taunton has become Unitarian, and Wedmore became extinct about the beginning of this century.

I have now gone through the early history of that part of the General Baptist body which has remained in connexion with us. With the history of those churches which have joined "the New Connexion," I am less acquainted, and I must pass over them very briefly.

There were many churches in the counties of Buckingham, Huntingdon, Cambridge and Northampton, and especially in the county of Lincoln. The most eminent labourer in this county was Thomas Grantham, who was born in 1634 at the village of Halton, close to Spilsby, in Lincolnshire, and who, having been brought under deep religious impressions and led to embrace the principles of the Baptists, was baptized at Boston in 1653. He was soon called to preach; and, though at first reluctant to do so, was so assiduous and successful, that he gathered a church at Halton, of which in 1656 he became pastor. Attempts were made to suppress their meetings, and the minister and members were summoned before the magistrates, but they obtained their discharge. They were then mobbed and otherwise ill-treated, but they persisted. On the Restoration of Charles the Second, the persecution became more vehement; the violence of the mob and the

injustice of the magistrates combined to oppress them, and the unfortunate Baptists had no other resource than to address to the King himself a statement of their wrongs. This was presented to Charles within two months of his Restoration by Thomas Grantham and Joseph Wright, another of their leading ministers, who soon afterwards removed to Maidstone, as already noticed. The King gave them a gracious reply, and the persecution was for a time restrained: but after the mad insurrection of the Fifth-Monarchy men under Venner, it was renewed with increased bitterness; and their various efforts to vindicate themselves and to obtain an alleviation of their wrongs, met with no success.

In these persecutions Grantham had to bear his full share; but his spirit was unsubdued; and in various publications he sought to vindicate what he judged to be truth, to refute calumny, and to remonstrate against injustice. In 1666, he was ordained a Messenger of the churches: and his piety and zeal made him a most valuable labourer among his brethren during the whole of this trying period. He extended his labours into the adjoining county of Norfolk, and founded General Baptist churches in the city of Norwich and at Yarmouth, both of which still exist. They belong to the New Connexion; but I have preached repeatedly to that at Yarmouth. He spent the latter part of his life at Norwich, where he had a long discussion on the validity of the ministry of the Baptists and other Dissenters, and on infant baptism, with a worthy clergyman of the Established Church, the Rev. John Connould; which discussion led to a warm friendship between them, equally honourable to both. Notwithstanding his worth, various attempts were made by individual malice to destroy his character by calumny, and his enemies even meditated violence against his person; so that when he died, in January 7, 1692, it was reported that they intended to offer insult to his body. To prevent this, Mr. Connould caused him to be buried in the aisle of his own church, read with tears the funeral service over him,

and, when he closed the book, added, "This day has a very great man fallen in Israel."

He published in 1678, under the title of "*Christianismus Primitivus*" ("*Primitive Christianity*"), what may be termed a complete body of divinity. It is a small folio volume of 600 pages. He published also several other works, but this is the most important.

Rev J C Means

DIVINE GUIDANCE.

BY FATHER J. H. NEWMAN.

LEAD, kindly Light, amid th' encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on ;

The night is dark, and I am far from home ;
Lead thou me on :

Keep thou my feet, I do not ask to see
The distant scene ; one step enough for me.

I was not ever this, nor prayed that thou
Should'st lead me on ;

I loved to choose and see my path ; but now
Lead thou me on !

I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will. Remember not past years !

So long thy power has blessed me, sure it still
Will lead me on ;

O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone ;

And with the morn those angel faces smile
That I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

STATE CHURCHES AND VOLUNTARY CHURCHES.

From the Opening Address of the Chairman (the Rev. Thomas Goadby, B.A.) at the General Baptist Association at Derby, June 23, 1868.

MEANWHILE, in our own land the time is growing ripe for some signal and wondrous victory for the Lord of heaven and earth. The question of a State Church is being solved by the logic of events. For three hundred years the English Establishment has been on its trial, and the judgment of the nation must ere long be pronounced upon it. It is clear enough to us what that judgment will be when the time comes for final decision. The State Church has failed in nearly every particular upon which it rests its claim to continuance as it is. It is the Church of the nation, but half the nation is alienated from its communion. It is the poor man's Church, but the poor man will not be lectured into acceptance of her dogmas, and can scarcely be bribed into attendance on her ministrations. It is the upholder of the unity of apostolic truth, but every variety of faith and almost every form of scepticism are represented in her pale. It is the bulwark of Protestantism, but always is it proving itself the best seminary of the Papacy and the broad highway of Rome. Meanwhile, by her side has sprung up a power upon principles she has repudiated, and is only at length just bringing herself in some measure to trust. That power is voluntarism, and its ultimate prevalence and triumph are assured. The State Church has worked side by side with free churches for a number of years, and though at first insignificant and despised, free churches have grown and multiplied until they equal or surpass the State Church in the number of their adherents. In past times she has sought the aid of intolerance and repression, but intolerance never added to her friends, and repression could not destroy her opponents. In more recent days she professes the principle of comprehension, and shews desire to open

her gates to all Christian denominations, forgetting that churches that hold it unfaithfulness to their Lord to give any control in their government to the State cannot be comprehended in her midst. She has possessed the monopoly of the ancient English Universities, and reproached her rivals with ignorance and vulgarity, but her rivals have more than held their own in the nation even against her superior learning and highly-cultured taste. She draws her home resources largely from endowments of the State, yet in all foreign enterprize she is met on equal terms or outstripped by churches that are self-sustaining. Her doctrines and polity have been fixed with consummate wisdom by Parliamentary settlement and Acts of Uniformity, but the free churches outside are in the main more harmonious and more scriptural in practice and creed than this ancient model of orthodoxy herself: and while a vigorous life is carrying Nonconformists to extended evangelistic efforts, to enlarged success and increasing unity, the internal dissensions and divergencies of our national Establishment are simply scandalous, and betoken serious strife and possibly speedy disruption. Her best friends are dissatisfied with her laxity and want of discipline, and look in vain to her bishops, her courts of law, or to Parliament itself, for redress. There is a feeling working within which must loosen the bonds by which she is linked to the State. At the same time, one by one, her long-cherished and exclusive privileges are passing from her hands. She surrenders under pressure her parochial claim to tax, and compulsory rates for her support are virtually gone. She abandons with regret her monopoly of municipal dignities; the emblem of mayoralty may be carried to conventicles, and the frequenters of conventicles take rank with attendants at the parish church. She relaxes under protest her hold upon the chief seats of learning; the Universities have opened their doors to the nation, and their fellowships and endowments cannot for ever be retained in the power of a single sect. It is evident, moreover, that a new spirit is manifesting

itself among thoughtful and earnest Churchmen, and the bonds of subservience to the State and dependence on her will are felt to be irksome and galling ; while the connection of Church and State is proved beyond question unnecessary to secure the stability of religion in the land, and singularly ineffectual to guarantee the honour and integrity of our Ministers of State.

The year just past has registered great progress in public opinion on the question of State endowments of religion. The Irish branch of the National Establishment has been condemned by large and overwhelming majorities in Parliament, and already totters to its fall. The appeal to the country which the close of the year is to witness cannot be doubtful as to its result. The new and enlarged constituencies will only endorse the decision of the representatives of whom the older and narrower House was composed, and possibly add to the majorities already obtained. But the friends of religious freedom and equality must be on the alert ; no efforts must be relaxed, no pains spared, to place before the country the true issue ; and despising the impudent devices of dexterous and unprincipled political craft, and unalarmed by the cry which revives the passions of a past era, Nonconformists must everywhere boldly and bravely do their duty as citizens. No one must flinch now ; no one must stand aloof now. The crisis of religious equality is coming, and the conflict of to-day is a preparation for the final struggle. There will be a determined stand made against the disestablishment of the Irish Church. Already there is a rallying of forces from all points of the compass. Whoever has eaten the crumbs that fall from the table of the dominant Church, or tasted the salt of the patronage of the State, is flocking to the aid of the more favoured institution, and stoutly defends its claims and champions its cause. Political rancour and religious bigotry will throw their strength into the Tory camp. Inch by inch, and foot by foot, as heretofore, our way to religious equality must be won ; and link after link must be broken ere the com-

plete emancipation of the Church from the State can be achieved. But the eleventh hour of the bondage of the Church has come, and God has sent us a man to be the prophet of the new era. The mantle of one of the noblest statesmen of recent days, the late Sir R. Peel, has fallen upon his distinguished disciple, the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, and a double portion of the master's spirit is entering into the pupil's soul. Driven for awhile by circumstances we need not characterize from his rightful place of power, he has wrung success from failure, and is gathering his strength afresh and maturing his plans for a new advance. The growing and enlarged liberality of his opinions, his high-principled and severe conscientiousness, his splendid gifts of genius, his commanding position, the charm of his unrivalled eloquence, point him out as the statesman who is greatly to contribute to the moulding of the future of our country. The hour is ripening for his return to power, and he who has already conferred by economic reforms so many blessings on our land is destined, let us hope, to add more signal service in the cause of ecclesiastical equality. He is a host in himself, and the policy he espouses must eventually triumph. May the good hand of the Lord upon him strengthen him for his work! Meanwhile, the most obvious lesson the condition of affairs teaches is, never under any circumstances whatever to despair of human progress and the freedom of the Church. The great and sacred principles which our fathers held, and for which they suffered and died, are coming to the front at last, and gaining acceptance on all sides. Unheeded or denounced long years ago, they are current to-day as maxims of political wisdom and the watchwords of political power. The kingdom of God is looking towards complete independence of the kingdoms of this world. The Church falls back on the sympathy of loving and willing hearts, on the inherent power of truth, and the mightier power of God. It is not that the principle of religion is being divorced from the principle of authority; the principle of religion is

finding its true authority in the word of the living God and the kingship of the Lord's anointed. The issues of the conflicts of our age must be favourable to the advancement of truth and religion in the world ; and it is reassuring to be admonished by the teaching of the time to be faithful to principle and loyal to the truth even in the dark and stormy day. The Lord reigns ; clouds and darkness are round about Him ; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne. His word is not bound ; His power is not straitened ; His kingdom comes. Marching steadily to the conflict, the glory of future victory already gleams on the armour, and lights up the standards of the brave embattled hosts of the King of kings.

BAPTISM A CENTURY AFTER THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

I WILL also relate the manner in which we dedicated ourselves to God when we had been made new through Christ, lest, if we omit this, we seem to be unfair in the explanation we are making. As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and entreat God with fasting for the remission of their sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them. Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water.* For Christ also said, "Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."† Now that it is impossible for those who have once been born to enter into

* This would be better translated, "They then take a bath in the water."

† Compare John iii. 3, 5.

their mothers' wombs, is manifest to all.* And how those who have sinned and repent shall escape their sins is declared by Esaias the prophet, as I wrote above; he thus speaks: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from your souls; learn to do well: judge the fatherless, and plead for the widow: and come and let us reason together, saith the Lord. And though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white like wool; and though they be as crimson, I will make them white as snow. But if ye refuse and rebel,† the sword shall devour you: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."‡

And for this [rite] we have learned from the apostles this reason. Since at our birth we were born without our own knowledge and choice, by our parents coming together, and were brought up in bad habits and wicked training; in order that we may not remain the children of necessity and of ignorance, but may become the children of choice and knowledge, and may obtain in the water the remission of sins formerly committed, there is pronounced over him who chooses to be born again, and has repented of his sins, the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe: he who leads to the laver the person to be washed calling Him by that name alone.§ For no one can utter the name of the ineffable God,|| and if any one dare to say that there is a name, he raves with a hopeless madness. And this washing is called "illumination," because they who learn these things are illuminated in their understandings. And in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and in the name of the Holy Ghost, who through the prophets foretold all things about Jesus, he who is illuminated is washed.

From the First Apology of Justin Martyr, as translated in the Ante-Nicene Library. It was probably written about A.D. 139.

* Compare John iii. 4.

† Rather, "If ye do not listen to me." ‡ Isaiah i. 16—20.

§ i.e. calling him only "God," "Father," and "Lord;" which are descriptions or titles, not names.

|| Rather, "No one can give a name to the ineffable God."

THE BILLINGSHURST ANNIVERSARY.

THE members of the Billingshurst congregation have wisely resolved to make the commemoration of their minister's settlement an annual thing. They were encouraged by the good meeting last year (of which an account was given in our second number, p. 34) and by the results of it to hold a similar meeting this year; and they had sympathy and encouragement from friends in other quarters, who desired to promote a revival of the piety and earnestness which gave life to our churches in the old days.

They invited our dear brother, Samuel Martin, of Trowbridge, to preach the anniversary sermons, which he did on Sunday, Sept. 19th. He preached in the morning on Steadfastness in Religion, from 1 Cor. xv. 58, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." The congregation was good, nearly filling the little chapel; and after the service, the Lord's Supper was administered to twenty-two communicants, the same number as last year. In the evening, Mr. Martin preached (from Deut. xxxiii. 25, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be") another sermon full of comfort and encouragement, to a full and attentive congregation. The services of the day were listened to and will be long remembered with great interest and delight.

On Monday, the 20th, there was a tea-meeting in the chapel, which was very tastefully decorated with flowers and evergreens, with the word "Welcome" immediately facing the entrance. Above eighty persons in all sat down to tea, being as many as the place would accommodate; and a pleasant thing it was to look round on happy faces, and to listen to the buzz of cheerful voices. After tea there was a general adjournment to the burial-ground, while the friends who had the

business in charge removed the tables on which the social meal had been spread, and re-arranged the benches in a convenient form for hearing. It was a beautiful autumn evening ; the western sky still reddened with the glow of sunset, and the deepening shadow gently falling on the quiet graves, where rest the mortal remains of those whose living footsteps went up in former days to the house of prayer, whose voices were lifted up in praise, and whose ears reverently listened to the preacher's message to their souls. It was interesting to mark the recurrence on stone after stone of the same names,—Evershed, Turner and others ; shewing how branches of the same family had clustered round the spot, and contributed, generation after generation, to fill the sanctuary. Two of the former ministers are among the sleepers : William Evershed, whose long and earnest pastorate of forty-four years (1755—1799) commenced with the building of the chapel and came down nearly to the close of the last century ; and Thomas Letter Taylor, whose career was cut short by an early death, and the image of whose portly form survives among the recollections of the writer's boyhood, and the sight of whose grave reminds him of those other and distant graves where rest his widow and his only son, who have followed their husband and father to a brighter world.

Meanwhile the young people who were to lead the singing had gathered round the harmonium in the gallery ; and Mr. KENNARD, the minister of the congregation, who was Chairman, took his seat, and the meeting united in singing good old John Newton's hymn—

“ Kindred in Christ, for his dear sake,
A hearty welcome here receive ;
May we together now partake
The joys which only he can give,” &c.

The CHAIRMAN then, in a few modest and appropriate words, expressed his pleasure at seeing so many friends around him ; and, reviewing his brief ministry,

said that though the result of it was far short of what he had hoped and desired, there had not been wanting some encouraging indications of progress. He then called on Mr. Means, who had come down from London, to speak to the sentiment—"Christ the Saviour, the preacher's theme, the believer's trust, and the guide and pattern of all in the practical work and business of life."

Mr. MEANS feared that, from fear of believing too much about Christ, our churches had failed to realize the full influence of what they did believe; and he urged the importance of realizing his presence with us now as a living Saviour, according to his own promise that where two or three were gathered together in his name, there he would be in the midst of them.

The meeting then sung Lyte's beautiful hymn, so appropriate to the time and to the tone of the remarks of the last speaker—

"Abide with me ! fast falls the eventide :
The darkness deepens ; Lord, with me abide," &c.

The next sentiment—"May our Churches be pervaded by a higher spiritual life, founded upon a deep sense of their inward need, and guided by a clear appreciation of the value of the salvation revealed in the gospel"—was spoken to by Mr. BRAITHWAITE, the minister of the neighbouring congregation at Horsham, who expressed the regard which he and the friends at Horsham felt for Mr. Kennard, and their sense of the kind service he had on occasion rendered them. He considered that the terms of the sentiment to which he had to speak might be differently understood by different persons, and that the manifestation of the spiritual life would also be different; and that there was not necessarily less life because there was less manifestation. He urged that we should hold out the character of Christ to the admiration and reverence and love of men.

Mr. BROMHAM, of Petworth, spoke to the sentiment of "The religious education of the young :"* and Mr. SIDNEY PRICE, of Horsham, in answer to the Chairman's call, spoke a few kindly words ; after which the company sung those beautiful words of Charlotte Elliott's,

"My God and Father, while I stray
Far from my home, on life's rough way,
O teach me from my heart to say,
 'Thy will be done !'" &c.

Mr. SAMUEL MARTIN then spoke to the last sentiment—"The Christian Church, founded on the Rock of Ages, the shelter through all time of the downcast, the sorrowing and the penitent, radiant with the eternal light of God's love, and echoing from generation to generation the joyful songs of the redeemed." In an earnest and very impressive speech, he illustrated the sentiment by instances drawn from his own experience in his long ministry at Trowbridge, pointed out the dangers in the present day of infidelity on the one hand and superstition on the other, and urged his hearers to cleave to the religion of the New Testament, the place of which no system of philosophy could supply.

Mr. DENDY AGATE, of Manchester New College, expressed the pleasure with which he had heard Mr. Martin's sermons the day before and his speech that evening ; and moved the thanks of the meeting to the friends who had come from a distance to help them, and to the ladies who had made such admirable arrangements and provision for the evening. The resolution was seconded by Mr. J. KENSETT, and carried. Mr. SAMUEL MARTIN and Mr. MEANS, in acknowledging it, spoke of the pleasure they had in coming, their regard for Mr. Kennard, and their desire to forward the good work which they believed he was doing.

* The sentiment, in full, was, "The religious training of the young, welcome now as ever to the Redeemer's arms, and the subjects now as ever of the Redeemer's blessing."

The company then sung the hymn,

“Hail, sweetest, dearest tie that binds
In one our glowing hearts,” &c.,*

and Mr. SAMUEL MARTIN closed the meeting with prayer and a benediction.

J. C. M.

THE LATE REV. FRANCIS BISHOP.

OUR narrow limits and unfrequent issue necessarily make our obituary notices few and brief; but we cannot let good men, holding a high place as Christians and ministers, pass into eternity without a word of kindly and reverent notice, especially when they have been long known to and loved by many of us. Such a one we have recently lost in the good Francis Bishop, of Chesterfield, who died on the 5th of August last.

He was born, we believe, at Dorchester, where a part of his family still reside, and was in the early part of his life assistant to a chemist; but he quitted that business to prepare himself for the Christian ministry, first by private study, and then under the instruction of the late Rev. B. Mardon, M.A., of Worship Street, attending at the same time the classes of University College, London. While with Mr. Mardon he was led to consider the subject of believers' baptism, and became convinced of its obligation. He therefore determined to observe the ordinance, and as the state of Mr. Mardon's health prevented him from administering it, Mr. Bishop was baptized at Worship Street by the writer of this notice on May 20th, 1839. He continued his studies till the close of the session 1839-40, receiving some assistance from our Education Fund to enable him to

* This and the other hymns sung at the meeting are from the card of eight “*Supplementary Hymns*,” printed by our “*Juvenile Fund*,” which may be had (25 for 1s. 6d.) of the Secretary to that Fund, Mr. T. N. Dyer, 154, St. James's Road, Bermondsey, London, S.E.

do so. Dr. Sadler and the Rev. Henry Solly were his fellow-students under Mr. Mardon.

In 1840 he settled as minister with the then recently formed Unitarian congregation at Cheltenham, from whence he before long removed to Warrington, and afterwards to Exeter. He left Exeter to become Domestic Missionary at Liverpool, an office for which his combination of warm benevolence with sound judgment particularly fitted him. He removed from Liverpool to Manchester in order to combine with the charge of the Domestic Mission there the instruction in missionary work of the students of the Home Missionary Board; but the result did not satisfy him, and in 1858 he became minister of the Chesterfield congregation, where he continued till his death.

He took a warm interest in the total-abstinence movement, and was a staunch opponent of slavery and of State-churchism. During the great American civil war he distinguished himself by his warm and unswerving advocacy of the Northern States.

In 1843, while minister at Warrington, he preached our Assembly sermon from those words of Christ (John xvii. 21, 22), "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one."

J. C. M.

[Some of the particulars given above are from the obituary notice in the *Unitarian Herald* of Aug. 13th.]

Published by E. T. WHITEFIELD, 178, Strand.

Packets of four or more copies sent post free, or 25 copies for 1s. 6d., by application to Mr. T. N. DYER, 154, St. James's Road, Bermondsey, London, S.E.; to whom also all payments are to be made. Quarterly payments are desired.

Printed by C. Green & Son, 178, Strand.

THE
GENERAL BAPTIST MESSENGER.

No. 6. Vol. I.

JANUARY, 1870.

Price 1d.

HOW OUR GENERAL BAPTIST CHURCHES
WERE PLANTED AND HOW THEY GREW.

CHAP. IV.—RELIGIOUS BELIEF OF THE BODY AND ITS ECCLESIASTICAL ORGANIZATION—CHURCHES—ASSOCIATIONS—THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY—CHURCH OFFICERS—ELDERS—DEACONS—MINISTERS—MESSENGERS—RELIGIOUS SERVICES OF THE CHURCHES—BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER—LAYING ON OF HANDS—TREATMENT BY SUCCESSIVE GOVERNMENTS, EPISCOPALIAN, PRESBYTERIAN AND INDEPENDENT—THE RESTORATION AND RENEWED PERSECUTION—DECLARATION OF INDULGENCE—POPISH PLOT—JAMES II.—THE REVOLUTION.

HAVING thus traced the foundation and growth of the various churches which constitute our body, I will proceed to give some account of their religious belief and ecclesiastical constitution, and of their treatment by the successive governments under which they lived.

Of their religious belief I shall have occasion to speak in the second part of my narrative, and need therefore to say the less here. As it appears in their public confessions, it approached, except in its Arminianism, the general belief of the Puritans. I say approached, rather than coincided with ; for, as I shall hereafter have to notice, the statements of their belief on some important points, the Trinity for instance, are worded in a way which seems to me to shew a consciousness that there were, from a very early period, various opinions existing among them, and that they were willing to allow that variety to continue, so long as it did not thrust itself prominently forward. In other words, their orthodoxy was less pronounced, and conformity to it less strin-

gently enforced, than in other bodies. It is likely, from subsequent indications, that there were, all along, two tendencies existing among them ; one, to a more exclusive orthodoxy, and another more comprehensive and more tolerant ; but while their churches were so bitterly persecuted, these different tendencies did not disturb their union ; and it was not until the Revolution of 1688, and the Toleration Act which followed it, had placed their liberties on a secure basis, that they burst out into vigorous life, and led to bitter and continued hostility.

Their ecclesiastical organization was very complete. Each church was a society of baptized believers, formed, in the first instance, by the voluntary association of such, and maintained and enlarged by the continued accession of new members, who were admitted by the suffrage of the existing members. They exercised a very strict supervision over each other ; indeed, they carried it to a degree which would hardly be borne in the present day ; and their early church records would furnish interesting and important information on the domestic life and habits of that part of the community to which they belonged. They also regarded it as a duty to help each other, and contributed freely to the relief of poor members, to the supply of the wants of the imprisoned, and to the assistance of those who were subjected to fines and confiscations. They held frequent meetings for business, as well as for worship ; and in many cases, if not in all, preserved a full record of what was transacted.

The churches of a district usually formed themselves into an Association, which met periodically, either quarterly, half-yearly or yearly, as circumstances required and admitted. These meetings were composed of the elders of the several churches and of representatives, chosen for that time, or of representatives alone, the elder being usually one of those chosen. The churches and Associations held a General Assembly, constituted in like manner. The earliest known General Assembly

was held in 1656, which is incidentally mentioned in the records of the now extinct Tunbridge Wells church ; but there were probably others earlier. Neither the Associations nor the Assembly had any power over the churches, whose independence was carefully guarded. They could advise or admonish ; but if the advice or admonition was neglected, they could only “ withdraw from ” the offending church, that is, exclude it from companionship with them, until it acknowledged its wrong-doing and shewed itself more complying.

Their churches had three classes of officers, or I may say four. The elders were the pastors, or, as we should now say, the ministers, of the several churches. They were set apart to their office with great solemnity. It was, indeed, the appointment of the church over which they were called to preside, that constituted their title to their office ; but that appointment was always followed by a solemn ordination service, in which the neighbouring elders and the messengers took part. The distinctive work of the elder was the administration of the Lord’s Supper ; the other duties of his office, preaching and baptizing, were not confined to him. The deacons had the charge of the temporal affairs of the church, and especially the care of the poor, as in the days of the apostles ; for it was a principle of our fathers to follow as closely as they could the constitution of the church of the apostolic age. The deacons were appointed by the church, sometimes by lot, and were set apart to their office by an ordination service, the elder of the church presiding. Women sometimes were appointed to the deaconship, after apostolic precedent (Rom. xvi. 1).

Members of a church who possessed the gift of preaching were called to the work by the church to which they belonged, and without such call they were not thought to be warranted in preaching. When called, they were entitled ministers, and either assisted the elder of their own church and supplied his place when required, or otherwise exercised their gifts as opportunity offered. Many of them were very acceptable preachers,

and were chosen, as vacancies occurred, to the eldership of their own or other churches ; so that their ministry thus became a virtual training for the elder's office.

The messengers were in fact elders, but with this difference, that while the office of an elder was related to the particular church by which he was appointed, the office of a messenger had no such restriction ; he was, so to speak, an elder at large. Originally, he was a home-missionary, sent out to preach what our fathers regarded as the true gospel in places that were as yet unacquainted with it. Thus we have already seen (p. 39 above), Henry Denne was appointed a "Messenger to divulge the gospel of Jesus Christ." But this was not their only work ; they took part in the ordination of elders, and supplied for a time the elder's place in churches where that office was vacant. They were considered to be a distinct class of church officers, and their scriptural precedent was found, or thought to be so, in the notices of Barnabas, Luke, Timothy and Titus, in the New Testament. Their name was taken from 2 Cor. viii. 23.

Originally they were appointed to their office either by single churches, as in the case of Henry Denne, or by the Associations. At a later time, the appointment was by the General Assembly, to which it is now confined. They appear to have been regarded from an early period, if not from the first, as members of the Assembly by virtue of their office ; and in the earliest records are usually enumerated together, before either elders or representatives. With the decline of our body their number has diminished. There are now three, brethren Samuel Martin, of Trowbridge, John Marten, of Peckham, and myself.

The public religious services of the churches consisted of prayer, reading the Scriptures, preaching or exhortation (then termed "prophesying"), and an exercise called "praise," the manner of which it is not now easy to learn, but which was not congregational singing, the introduction of which, at a subsequent time, was

the occasion of much discussion. The reading of the Scriptures is said to have been objected to in some churches ; but the objection does not appear to have been at all general.

The name which our fathers bore sufficiently indicates the mode in which they observed the ordinance of baptism. In the observance of the Lord's Supper, or, as they often termed it, "breaking of bread," they followed, as far as they could ascertain it, the practice of the apostolic church. They appear at first to have had no rule as to the frequency of its observance ; but at a later period it was usual to have it monthly. None but Baptists were admitted to the table at first ; but gradually this strictness has been relaxed, and now open communion is all but universal, both with us and in the New Connexion. A few churches, apparently a very few, observed the ordinance after a meal, of which the church partook in common. The Fenstanton church vindicated this practice as both scriptural and convenient ; but it was the occasion of much reproach, and entailed on those who adhered to the practice the nickname of "Leg-of-Mutton Baptists."

Many of the early General Baptists held that, according to Scripture, baptized persons should be received into the fellowship of the church by the elder laying his hands on them ; and some churches made this practice obligatory, which caused great dissension. Subsequently the practice was generally given up. Some of us, however, incline to it as expedient and edifying, understanding it to signify, not the communication of ecclesiastical authority or spiritual gifts, but simply the commendation of the person in prayer to God.

It only remains for me to record the varying treatment which our fathers received from the successive governments under which they lived. Previously to the great Civil War, A.D. 1642, they were, like all other Nonconformists, prohibited from meeting for worship ; and though, as we have seen, some churches were formed, they existed only by the connivance or weakness of the authorities, and were continually subjected to persecu-

tion when these were stimulated to vigilance or regained power. The predominance of the Presbyterian party in London and elsewhere, in the earlier period of the Civil War, brought no relief, as appears from the sufferings of Thomas Lamb, Henry Denne and Samuel Oates, already mentioned (pp. 28, 37, 40). Indeed, the Presbyterians of that day rivalled the Episcopalians in intolerance. Even Baxter himself, in a passage quoted by Dr. Toulmin in his *Appendix* to Neal's *History of the Puritans*, contends, that it is the duty of the magistrate to prevent immersion as a virtual breach of the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," and a heinous sin; and gives a list of diseases occasioned by it, which would be frightful, but for its ludicrous absurdity. He says that baptism by immersion is "good for nothing but to dispatch men out of the world that are burdensome and to ranken churchyards;" and intimates that covetous landlords countenanced the "Anabaptists" (as he calls them), as a means of "getting their tenants to die apace, that they might have new fines and herlots."*

With the growing ascendancy of the Independents under Cromwell, the Baptists obtained remission of the penalties to which they had been so long subjected. A severe law was, indeed, enacted in 1648, against such as rejected infant baptism and held church government by Presbyterian forms unlawful. But though the Presbyterians retained sufficient power in Parliament to enact persecution, they could not carry their law into practice, and it remained a dead letter. During the time of the Commonwealth and the Protectorate, the Baptists were allowed liberty, with some slight and transient exceptions, such as those related above in our notice of Thomas Grantham (p. 90), arising from local bigotry.

The Restoration of Charles the Second, and perhaps the prospect of it before its actual occurrence, removed the restraints from the bigoted magistrates, and perse-

* Vol. III. p. 373, ed. 1837.

cution began in many places. Our fathers suffered severely both in Lincolnshire and Kent. William Jeffery and George Hammon, and many others, were imprisoned. Charles had promised liberty of conscience before his Restoration, and when the sufferers addressed complaints to him, he gave them fair words. But the renewed ascendancy of the Episcopalians shewed that their intolerance was no way abated, and they would probably, in any case, have forced Charles, even if sincere, into measures of severity against all but their own party. But the impulse given to their desire of persecution by the mad attempt at insurrection by Venner and the Fifth-monarchy men (in January, 1661), led to the immediate suppression of the meetings of the Baptists and Quakers; and the following years, till 1672, were years of bitter persecution against them both.

In 1672, the state of public affairs and the change of popular feeling disposed the government to milder measures towards Protestant Nonconformists; and by the King's "Declaration of Indulgence," freedom of worship was for a time restored to our fathers. To understand these changes, it is necessary to bear in mind two things, the affinity between men's views in ecclesiastical and in civil matters, and the oscillation, the ebb and flow, of public feeling in large communities. The affinity between men's opinions in ecclesiastical and civil matters comes out very clearly to the view of those who thoughtfully contemplate this period of English history. The Romanists, and that part of the Established Church which sympathized with them (the High-churchmen), were friendly to absolute monarchy, at least to as near an approach to it as English traditions and habits allowed: they were the extreme Royalists. The Presbyterians were the friends of limited monarchy, and some of the Episcopalians (the Low-churchmen) sympathized with them. The Independents, Baptists and other "sectaries," as they were termed, were for the most part Republicans. To their earnestness and decision the establishment of the Commonwealth had been

owing; and when Cromwell, by the establishment of the Protectorate, assimilated the government to a monarchy, they had been among his stoutest opponents; and though they had quietly submitted to the King's government, it is likely that they retained their old views, for experience had not yet shewn how far a limited monarchy was compatible with a wide extension of popular freedom.

Again, while the decided advocates of these several views retained their political opinions steadfastly amid all changes, there was a large number of people less decided, and therefore susceptible of stronger impressions from temporary causes, or capable, from the absence of fixed preponderating tendencies, of forming a cooler judgment. And these, as they swayed from side to side, gave to the government a direction this way or that. The reaction from the strictness of the Puritanic governments of the Commonwealth and the Protectorate had been manifested in the warm welcome given to Charles on his Restoration; but the profligacy and corruption, the disasters and disgraces of twelve years, had cooled this enthusiastic loyalty; and the avowal of Romanism by the King's brother, the Duke of York, and the subservience of the court and government to the growing power and ambition of the French King, changed the tone of popular feeling, and gave it the direction of favour of the oppressed Protestant Nonconformists, and of dread of and hatred to the Roman Catholics. This latter feeling grew till it culminated in the fearful delusion and cruelties of the notorious "Popish Plot," A.D. 1678. Before this, however, the King was compelled, by the jealousy of the Parliament at such a stretch of the royal prerogative and by the popular dread of the Romanists who shared in its benefits, to cancel his "Declaration of Indulgence;" and the various penal laws against the Nonconformists came again in force, though their oppressiveness was partially moderated by public opinion. But in the last few years of Charles's reign came another reaction; the King

governed without a Parliament (A.D. 1681 to 1685); and the court and the High-church party, released from restraint, persecuted all Protestant Nonconformists, our fathers among them, as vehemently as ever. Incidental notices of these persecutions of Charles's reign have appeared in the preceding narrative.

In the beginning of the reign of James the Second, the persecution still continued, and was even aggravated by the foolish rebellion of the unhappy Duke of Monmouth. But when the King's open patronage of Romanism had aroused the opposition of the Established Church, he sought to counterbalance their hostility by courting the Nonconformists. His position and policy are well described by Macaulay (*Hist. of England*, ch. vii.): "Dull as was the intellect of James, despotic as was his temper, he felt that he must change his course. He could not safely venture to outrage all his Protestant subjects at once. If he could bring himself to make concessions to the party which predominated in both Houses, if he could bring himself to leave to the established religion all its dignities, emoluments and privileges unimpaired, he might still break up Presbyterian meetings, and fill the gaols with Baptist preachers. But if he was determined to plunder the hierarchy, he must make up his mind to forego the luxury of persecuting the Dissenters. If he was henceforth to be at feud with his old friends, he must make a truce with his old enemies. He could overpower the Anglican Church only by forming against her an extensive coalition, including sects which, though they differed in doctrine and government far more widely from each other than from her, might yet be induced, by their common jealousy of her greatness and by their common dread of her intolerance, to suspend their animosities till she was no longer able to oppress them." Thus originated that remission of persecution which our fathers welcomed, and which lasted till the Revolution of 1688 and the resulting Toleration Act placed their liberties on a more secure and lasting basis.

But the policy of James failed as far as his own purposes were concerned. The national horror and dread of Romanism kept the Dissenters from any coalition with the Romanists, and drove all Protestants, from the High-churchman to the Baptist, into that close, though transient alliance, which effected the defeat and dethronement of James. Those feelings of horror and dread, though they have led to much injustice and wrong and oppression, which are not even yet wholly removed, have been, in the appointment of Him "who maketh the wrath of men to praise him," the providential retribution of the former atrocities of the Romish Church and party; the assassinations, attempted and perpetrated, of sovereign princes, such as William of Orange and Henry the Third and Fourth of France, the cruelties of Alva in the Netherlands, the fires of Smithfield, the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and the Dragonades of Louis the Fourteenth. The oppressions of the Anglican Church paled by the side of these. Yet they were fearful enough; for it has been computed that between the Restoration and the Revolution (A.D. 1660 to 1688), sixty thousand Protestant Dissenters suffered in person or in pocket, of whom five thousand died in the stifling and pestilential dungeons of that day. (Jeremy White, in Neal's *Hist. of the Puritans*, Part v. ch. i. Vol. III. p. 272, ed. 1837.) Of these sufferings our honest, zealous and stout-hearted fathers had their full share; as, indeed, my narrative has shewn. Griffith, Allen, Plant, Clayton, Maulden, Ives, William Jeffery, George Hammon, Hobbs, Taverner, Knott, Morecock, Wright, Caffyn and Grantham; in fact, nearly all the ministers I have mentioned, not to speak of numerous members of their flocks, were among them.

Here I close this portion of our history. Before long I hope to resume my subject and complete it.

JOSEPH CALROW MEANS.

DAYBREAK.

It is beautiful to watch the coming on of day. I have watched it in years long gone by, rising when it was yet deep night, when the stars seemed, to the eye whose perception had been freshened by sleep, to shine with more than common brightness, and only a paler tint than the deep solemn blue of the sky marked the eastern edge of the horizon. In a little while that tint became paler still; then it was suffused with a rosy flush, while the fleecy clouds that overhung it shone on their lower edges like burnished gold; and then the flush became rosier and the burnished gold brighter; until at last the sun rose above the edge of the horizon, and the dew-drops on the grass sparkled in his beams, while the few who had risen for the sight or from some other call, cast long shadows on the ground. The morning was come, when "man goeth forth to his work and his labour until the evening."

I am watching now the brightening of a better day, a day of wider sympathy and of a juster mutual appreciation among the long-divided sections of the Christian Church. I do not say the fulness of this day is come; but it is coming. You may see it in the freer association of Christians in the pursuit of common objects, in the milder tone of the organs of denominational opinion, in the conversation of men, especially of young men, when you break through the barriers of sect and exchange thoughts with real freedom and confidence.

It is not so much that men are giving up their opinions, though in many respects they are doing that; but they are getting to hold them in a more comprehensive spirit. They are penetrating into the meaning of the doctrines they have long clung to, and with their increasing mastery of the meaning they are getting less anxious about the expression, and finding that, with apparent difference, there may be substantial agreement.

Again, where clear and decided differences are felt to exist, there is greater readiness to allow for the various causes from which they have taken rise; there is

less disposition to impute error to perversity of temper, and therefore both the errors and those who hold them are looked at more fairly and judged more mildly.

I have said that men are changing their views. This is less the result of controversy, the changes wrought by which are far less extensive than those who engage in it anticipate, but by the progress of knowledge and the set of the current of opinion generally. Our theology is modified by our methods of judgment in matters not theological. The changes are generally in the direction of moderation ; and this circumstance conduces to the fairness of view and mildness of judgment which I have noticed.

Doubtless there are many exceptions to this growth of liberality, and party organs are apt to notice and parade them ; but there is growth, wide and rapid too, for all that. Men bound by voluntary ties do not move with the uniformity of drilled soldiers ; but the protests of stationary individuals or of minorities are simply evidences of the general advance. They may derive weight from individual character, and should always be treated with tenderness ; but to treat an individual or a minority tenderly is one thing ; to interpret their protests as the expression of the mind of the body to which they belong, is simply absurd.

Among the indications of this widening spirit in the Christian world, I hail the approximation of the Old and New Connexions of the General Baptists. It is not that we are yet ripe for a re-union, but a kindlier mutual feeling will prepare the way for that ; and that kindlier feeling will be promoted by the presence of several New Connexion ministers whom we are hoping to see at the next meeting of our Assembly.

J. C. M.

BAPTISM.

WHEN from the Jordan's gleaming waves
Came forth the Sinless One,
A voice athwart the heavens was heard,
"Lo ! my beloved Son !"

The Baptist, gazing on his face,
 With the soul's radiance bright,
 Beheld upon his sacred head
 A snow-white dove alight.

Now, with baptismal waters bathed,
 Thy children, Father, see !
 While heart and soul and mind and strength
 They consecrate to thee.

Send down on them thy holy dove,
 Thy Spirit undefiled ;
 Be each in purity and faith
 Thy well-beloved child !

O help them in the wilderness
 To conquer doubt and sin ;
 To see above them still thy peace,
 And hear thy voice within !

————— *Rev T B W Briggs.?*

THE TROWBRIDGE ANNIVERSARY.

OUR readers, some of them at least, have already seen a report of this meeting in the *Inquirer* ; but they will be interested in reading this fuller account, which we take from the columns of the *Trowbridge and North Wilts Advertiser*.

The forty-second anniversary of our brother Martin's pastorship was the occasion of the meeting. Forty-two years ! It brings to our mind that summer morning, thirty-eight years ago, when with a fellow-student (Rev. W. Odgers) we paid our first visit to Trowbridge, and our brother, with two other old friends (Rev. H. E. Howse and Mr. George Withall), came out to meet us ; and it quickens our anticipation of a yet happier greeting, on a still brighter morning, in that other land.

But we must not further delay the report. JCM

From the Trowbridge and North Wilts Advertiser.

This event was celebrated on Monday evening, Octo-

ber 4th, by a public tea-meeting in the school-room of the Conigre chapel. About 300 persons, many from other congregations, sat down to tea, after which a public meeting was held in the chapel.

The Rev. S. MARTIN presided, and after a hymn had been sung, opened the proceedings by expressing a wish that they would find it to be a profitable meeting. All he had to say to them regarding the special object of it, he had said to them the previous day. He had hoped that some other friend, more especially Mr. Andrews, would have taken the chair on the present occasion; but as that gentleman would be compelled to leave for Bristol before the meeting was concluded, he was unable to do so. He could not ask their friend Mr. Hawkins to accept the post, as he was at home unwell, and not able to be present. He had, therefore, undertaken that duty himself. They all knew his feelings with regard to them, and that their affection for each other as minister and congregation was unabated. He was thankful his life had been spared to him to minister to them year after year. Although since their last meeting they had to lament the death of some friends, the removal of others to distant parts of the world, and now the absence of others from sickness, still they had reason to be thankful to God for his many mercies to them during that period.

Mr. JABEZ RISON (*Baptist minister*) was first called upon to address the meeting. He considered it a pleasure to meet with them on this happy occasion, congratulated them on the success that had attended the labours of their pastor amongst them for so many years, and expressed his gladness that God had enabled them to meet together in this joyous way from year to year. It must be a source of pleasure to them to meet in this manner, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was always ready to join Christians of any denomination, whose bond of union was that they loved their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth. He trusted they would seek to derive the means of spiritual

blessings from the ministrations of their pastor from Sabbath to Sabbath. He rejoiced that their esteemed minister had been spared so long to preach to them the unsearchable riches of Christ. He also spoke of the interest their pastor took in the Sabbath-school, and concluded with a few earnest words on the blessedness of being engaged in the service of God in any way, however humble. He urged the young to give themselves to God ; to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, that all other things might be added unto them."

The Rev. Mr. DURRELL (*Baptist minister*), of Warminster, next spoke. This was the first time he had had the pleasure of coming amongst them. He first met their pastor at a recent gathering at Sutton Veney, and was charmed by his genial disposition and warmth of heart ; so that he was unable to refuse his request to come here to-night. He reviewed the past, as a proof that the cause of Christ was advancing, notwithstanding the apparent increase of error and superstition, which only seemed to stimulate the Christian zeal of the age. No doubt this church could look back upon the many years this ministry had been vouchsafed to them, and mark the advances this cause had made during that period in winning souls to Christ ; and no doubt the future was brighter still. The questions they might put to themselves should be—Have we as a church increased in holiness ? Is there amongst us a more intense earnestness in the cause of Christ ? Are we more useful, more zealous, more united and determined for the spread of the truth ? If they could answer these questions satisfactorily, they had great reason to be thankful. He reviewed the church in the world, and said that although it did seem that error was advancing and the truth retrograding, yet it was not really so ; for the truth was rolling on, like the waves of the sea, ever advancing, then apparently retreating, yet still advancing, till the highest point was reached, the progress sure and certain, because God had promised it. So it

would through all time, till the knowledge of the Lord covered the earth, as the waters cover the sea. God had said his word should prosper, his kingdom come. We must not, therefore, lay down the weapons of our warfare—Christ taught his disciples a different lesson—but as the walls of Jericho did not fall down until after they were compassed about seven days, until the besiegers pressed more and more upon the besieged ; so only would error and superstition be overcome and the truth advance, as the Christian Church was more pressing and untiring in advancing the kingdom of Christ.

The Rev. Mr. SMITH (*a minister of the New Connexion of General Baptists*), of Downton, was the succeeding speaker. In a most eloquent and comprehensive address, he commenced by reciprocating the kind fraternal spirit manifested by their pastor, and said it would be much better for the Church of Christ, and much better for the outside world, if this spirit were spread over the whole earth ; for the Christian Church, at the present time, was awfully incommensurate with the exigencies of the world. The speaker, in glowing language, reviewed the period of time this anniversary marked, and touched upon the many important changes which had taken place in the social, commercial and religious world, completely altering the constitution. He noted the advances we had made as a nation, pointed out the progressive improvement that had taken place in our literature, which was now to a great extent purged of its former infidel tendencies, and shewed that intellect and intelligence had advanced, that the thinking faculties of mankind were awakened, and thus the means of information so liberally provided both in the ephemeral and permanent standard literature of the age was exercising a wonderful influence on society at large, by checking the sensual gratifications and tastes of men, and promoting a healthy moral feeling. The voice of public opinion, too, was far more powerful than ever it was. It was not now considered as the expression of a lawless mob, but a voice that must be heard and obeyed. There

never was a period in this country's history when the sacred volume had such reverential deference paid to it, or when the desire to read it was so great; and the disputations and controversies upon it tended to elucidate its true spirit and meaning. Its voice speaks in the cabinet and the council, the halls of justice and science, the palace of the monarch and the cottage of the peasant. Perhaps there never was a period when its doctrines were so much revered, when there were so many faithful expositors of its contents, when fundamental errors were overcome by the march and majesty of divine truth, when so many organizations were at work to promote its circulation throughout the earth, or when so many supplications were being presented at the throne of grace that the truth might be more widely spread and received into the hearts of men. Still, the millennium is not yet come. Taking the population of the world at a thousand millions, and estimating that eight hundred thousand of these are merely nominal Christians; then allowing that two hundred thousand of these are but professed followers of Christ; and deduct from these the number of those who are Protestants, and then again those who are sincere believers travelling with their faces Zionwards, and how small the number becomes! When he spoke of Christians, he meant those who were untrammelled by state or any denominational considerations, for those distinctions did more to obstruct the progress of the truth than all the systems of infidelity and error that ever existed. In glowing language he appealed to Christians of all denominations to do more than ever they had yet done to advance the cause of Christ and make known his glorious Gospel, no matter how small or contracted their sphere might be. There never was such an opportunity for doing good as the present; and the man who could stand by and gaze listlessly on, was not actuated by the Christianity of God.

The Rev. JABEZ A. BRINKWORTH (*of Shepton Mallet*), delivered a very earnest address.

The choir sang some anthems most admirably during

the evening, Mr. J. Millington presiding at the organ. The proceedings closed with the singing of that beautiful hymn, "A day's march nearer home," and a benediction pronounced by the pastor.

A WORKING CHURCH.

It is between three and four months ago—two of them passed in the sick room—since it was my privilege to take part in the anniversaries of two of the churches belonging to the New Connexion of General Baptists, viz. the Praed-Street church on the 18th of October, and the Commercial-Road church on the 26th. It is of the first of these that I am about to speak.

The New Connexion began a century ago ; and in the midland counties, its main seat, it grew rapidly ; but in London it did not grow at all. It had for sixty years only two churches, the Commercial-Road church and "the Park church" in the Borough. But in or before 1830, a room was fitted up for preaching on the north-west border of London, and a congregation was gathered ; and in 1832, they were formed into a church, and a chapel was erected in New Church Street, Paddington. In 1835, Dr. Burns was chosen pastor, and has laboured ever since with such success, that the church reported to the Association at Sheffield last summer 527 members. The formation of this church, and especially the building of the chapel, were in a great degree owing to the energy and resolution of Mr. Henry Wileman, a young tradesman, who had recently joined them.

In or about 1841, a chapel in Praed Street, which had been built in 1818, was for sale. It was nearly opposite Mr. Wileman's place of business, and he saw the opportunity of forming a second church. Having been "dismissed" with some forty more from New Church Street, they formed a second General Baptist Church on that side of London. The present minister is the Rev. John Clifford, the Secretary of the Association of the New

Connexion, and editor of their periodical, the General Baptist Magazine. It was by invitation from him that I was present and took part in the anniversary meeting of the church.

It is my purpose not to report the speeches delivered, but only to record the work and progress of the church during the preceding year. The number of members added during the year was as follows: baptized, 38; received from other churches, 18; restored, 5; thus shewing an accession of 61 baptized members, to whom are to be added 15 admitted without baptism. The losses by death, removal, &c., were not stated. The total number of members was 453.

The Sunday-school contained 267 scholars, shewing an increase of about 50 in the total number, and a proportionate increase in the average attendance.

I ought to have said before this, that the chapel will seat probably 600 people, possibly more; but is inadequate to the requirements of the congregation, who are anxiously looking out for ground whereon to build a new and larger and handsomer place of worship.

I have now to speak of their contributions. The pew-rents and weekly offering amounted to £331. 10s. 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.; and there had been added to the fund for building a new chapel, £103. 10s. 6d., raising the total of that fund to £1801. 19s. 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ d.

For the poor they raised £120. 15s. 9d. thus: Poor Fund for the church, £64. 1s. 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.; Dorcas and Sick Visiting Society, £11. 3s. 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.; and Christian Instruction Society, for tracts and beef—a somewhat amusing combination—£45. 10s.

For other home objects they raised as follows: Sunday-school, £38. 16s. 7d.; Domestic Mission Branch School, £11. 8s.; Young Men's Society, £6. 15s. 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.; Temperance Society, £23. 10s.; and they made two collections for the London Baptist Association, amounting together to £30. 7s., making the amount raised for home objects (without counting the pew-rents, offertory and new chapel fund), £231. 13s. 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.

For the Foreign (i.e. Orissa) Mission of the New Connexion, £84. 5s. 9d., raising the total contributions of the church in the course of the year to £751. 0s. 2½d. The account from which we borrow the above statements gives the total as £763. 4s. 11¼d., which, if correct, shews that some item has been omitted.

The congregation by which these efforts have been made is, if one may judge by appearances, anything but wealthy; and I apprehend that the contributions contain few of those "handsome donations" which only the wealthy can give. It is by diffused and steady effort, the fruit of Christian principle, that the result is obtained. It is this which makes the example valuable. If the same spirit pervaded all Christian churches, how much more would be done! We say we can do little; but do not let us make that an excuse for leaving that little undone. It was the servant who had received only one talent that was condemned for hiding that one; it was upon her who had but two mites to give that the Saviour's warmest commendation was bestowed; and it was to the giver of a cup of cold water that the promise was given, that "he should in no wise lose his reward."

J. C. M.

The issue of the present number has been delayed by the severe and protracted illness of the Editor; but he is sufficiently advanced towards recovery to authorize the hope that the next number will appear punctually at its proper time.

Published by E. T. WHITFIELD, 178, Strand.

Packets of four or more copies sent post free, or 25 copies for 1s. 6d., by application to Mr. T. N. DYER, 154, St. James's Road, Bermondsey, London, S.E.; to whom also all payments are to be made. Quarterly payments are desired.



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